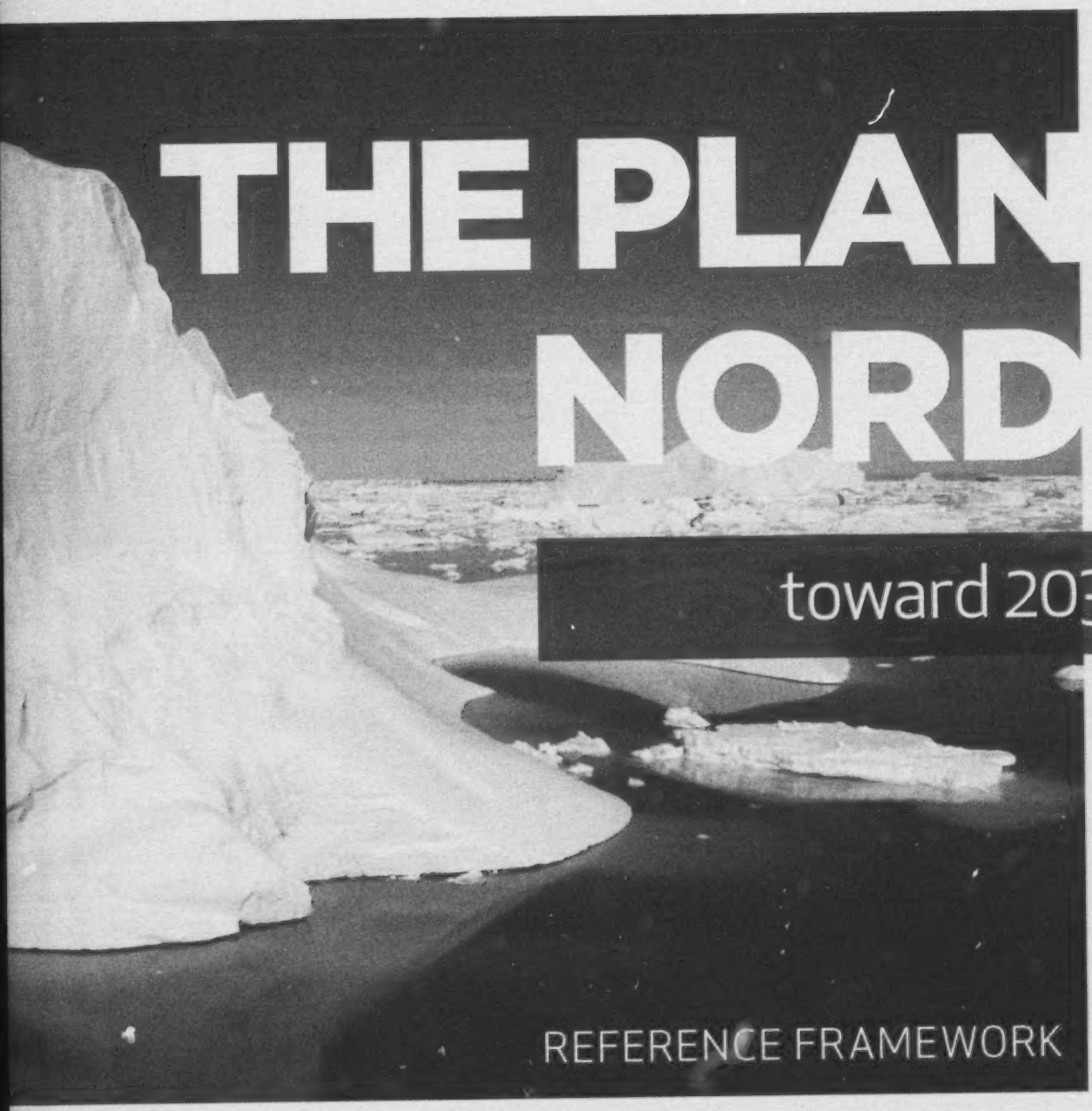
PLAN NORD

THE PLAN NORD

toward 2035

2015-2020 ACTION PLAN

REFERENCE FRAMEWORK



ENSEMBLE on fait avancer le Québec

Québec

Cover photo: Icebergs.
Photo credit: iStockphoto.com

The Plan Nord and its reference framework are available on the Plan Nord website plannord.gouv.qc.ca

Ce document est également disponible en français.

© Gouvernement du Québec

Secrétariat au Plan Nord

Legal deposit – Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec

ISBN: 978-2-550-72743-9 (print)
ISBN: 978-2-550-72744-6 (pdf)

100%

The *Plan Nord toward 2035* is a key element in a broad-based operation to spur Québec's economic recovery Québec's economy, undertaken by our government to stimulate employment and ensure prosperity. Québec needs to increase its overall wealth and create new jobs in all regions, and the Plan Nord will help us meet this challenge.

We have made the relaunching of the Plan Nord a priority, in order to optimize economic benefits for local and aboriginal communities in the North and for all regions of Québec. Our message is clear. Québec has a northern environment that is exceptionally rich in energy and natural resources, managed and developed within the framework of a rigorous, organized and well-coordinated process. The process is, in turn, based on partnership, the active involvement of the private sector, and support for local and aboriginal communities.

We have ensured that the Plan Nord brings together the essential conditions for attracting investors from inside and outside Québec who are interested in projects that enhance and develop the economic potential of the North. I have personally witnessed the keen interest generated among foreign investors by this opening up of northern Québec during international missions undertaken to promote the relaunching of the Plan Nord.

To create the conditions conducive to the development of resources in the North, it is essential to focus on the living conditions of the local populations and to address their specific needs. The Plan Nord includes a broad range of social measures that will help improve their wellbeing.

In terms of the environment, we want to develop the area in a sustainable and responsible way. The relaunching of the Plan Nord provides an opportunity to establish and specify conservation measures to ensure that, by 2035, 50% of the area covered by the Plan Nord is dedicated to non-industrial purposes, as well as the protection of the environment and the safeguarding of biodiversity.

In short, the relaunching of the Plan Nord will create a favourable climate for investment, which will be subject to fundamental, guiding principles for social development and environmental protection. This will make it possible to increase Québec's wealth and support the diversification of the local and regional economy, for the benefit of the inhabitants of the area covered by the Plan Nord, the Québec population as a whole, and future generations. We have chosen to make the Plan Nord a development project that is harmonious, ethical and respectful of the local and aboriginal communities that will be directly affected by its implementation.

Philippe Couillard
Premier of Québec

The *Plan Nord toward 2035* has been drafted on the basis of updated policy directions and a new vision for the North, its issues and its potential. The extensive resources of the North will be developed first and foremost for the benefit of local inhabitants, while contributing to the progress of Québec as a whole. In particular, the Plan Nord takes into account the realities and needs of local and aboriginal communities in the fields of employment, education, health and social services, justice, housing, culture and security.

In addition to these economic and social components, the Plan Nord retains a fundamental and essential focus on the environment. It includes concrete measures to ensure protection for the natural environment and wildlife, the conservation of the distinctive biodiversity of northern Québec, and the supply of clean, innovative forms of energy to northern communities. Our goal is to ensure that the Plan Nord is implemented in a responsible way and in strict compliance with the principles of sustainable development.

Our action plan for the next five years is designed to reflect these aims. It will harmonize and channel the priority actions of the government departments and bodies involved in the development of northern Québec. The actions planned will, among other things, facilitate access to the land, improve telecommunications infrastructures and increase scientific knowledge about the northern environment. Everything is in place to meet the objectives we have set.

The Société du Plan Nord will coordinate the development process while consulting with all the partners involved. It will help harmonize the activities of the government departments and bodies working in northern Québec, for the benefit of citizens in the North and throughout Québec. In addition to providing coordination for all stakeholders in the North, it will play an important role by consulting local communities to ensure the coherent planning of development prior to implementation.

To promote sustainable development in the North, the Société du Plan Nord will use the amounts available in the Fonds du Plan Nord. Adding this amount to existing funding for measures financed by government departments and bodies and contributions from other partners, a total of over $2 billion will be devoted to actions in the area covered by the Plan Nord, creating the best possible conditions for the harmonious development of the area.

With *The Plan Nord toward 2035* and its 2015-2020 action plan, the government will take a decisive step in the process that began in 2011 to ensure the sustainable development of northern Québec. We will continue to target the policy directions and fundamental priorities for action set out in the initial plan, while proposing new and innovative options adapted to the current context.

Pierre Arcand
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources,
Minister responsible for the Plan Nord and for the Côte-Nord region

A Message from the Premier III

A Message from the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Minister responsible for the Plan Nord and for the Côte-Nord region V

Foreword 9

Introduction 10

1. Context for the relaunching of the Plan Nord 11

1.1 A solid foundation based on past achievements 11

1.2 Area covered by the Plan Nord and key features 15

1.3 Known issues 15

2. Main policy directions 17

2.1 A vision for 2015-2035 17

2.2 Basic principles 17

2.3 Updated policy directions 18

3. Development of the North's economic potential 19

3.1 Objectives for 2035 20

3.2 Priority actions for 2015-2020 21

3.2.1 Re-establish a context conducive to mineral development based on a wide range of resources 21

3.2.2 Diversify and promote products from the forest environment and implement integrated forest management methods 30

3.2.3 Continue to develop the North's energy potential 34

3.2.4 Increase the socio-economic benefits of wildlife activities while ensuring the long-term viability of the resource 44

3.2.5 Promote tourism development by highlighting the area's distinctive character 47

3.2.6 Design and implement a sustainable northern bio-food model based on potential in the area 50

4. Development and wellbeing of local and aboriginal communities 52

4.1 Objectives for 2035 52

4.2 Priority actions for 2015-2020 53

4.2.1 Ensure that the development of the North generates concrete benefits for local and aboriginal communities 53

4.2.2 Train more specialized workers to meet the needs of development projects in the area covered by the Plan Nord 56

4.2.3 Promote student retention and academic success, and ensure that as many young people and adults as possible obtain basic qualifications 60

4.2.4 Support ongoing efforts to provide improved health and social services, justice and housing 63

4.2.5 Give priority to cultural development agreements as a lever for action by northern communities 70

4.2.6 Ensure security in the area covered by the Plan Nord 71

5. Protection of the environment and biodiversity conservation 74

5.1 Objectives for 2035 74

5.2 Priority actions for 2015-2020 75

5.2.1 By 2020, establish protected areas in 20 % of the area covered by the Plan Nord 75

5.2.2 Characterize the land base to target the most appropriate conservation measures 76

5.2.3 Continue to develop national parks as part of the target for protected areas 76

5.2.4 Ensure efficient environmental assessment processes 79

6. Conditions for success 81

6.1 Facilitate access to the land 81

6.2 Improve telecommunications infrastructures 84

6.3 Increase scientific knowledge and promote its application 87

6.4 Promote the Plan Nord in Canada and abroad 88

7. A partnership-based framework for implementation 90

7.1 Governance 90

7.1.1 The Société du Plan Nord 90

7.1.2 Close, ongoing collaboration with government departments and bodies 92

7.1.3 Specific partnerships: Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones, Secrétariat à l'implantation de la stratégie maritime and Investissement Québec 92

7.1.4 Joint action structures 93

7.2 Zones covered by the Plan Nord 94

7.2.1 Nunavik 95

7.2.2 Eeyou Istchee Baie-James 95

7.2.3 Côte-Nord region 96

7.2.4 Northern Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region 97

8. Financial framework 98

8.1 The Fonds du Plan Nord over a 25-year timeframe 100

8.2 Actions for the benefit of local and aboriginal populations and all Quebecers 101

Conclusion 102

Appendix 1 - Composition of the Ministerial Committee for the Plan Nord 104

Appendix 2 - List of Tables and Figures 105

Appendix 3 - List of actions proposed by the interdepartmental committee to support employment in the Côte-Nord region 106

Appendix 4 - List of Government Departments and Bodies 109

The initial Plan Nord

In May 2011, the Québec government unveiled the Plan Nord, an ambitious sustainable development program for the development of resources in northern Québec.[1] Based on a shared, unifying vision, this once-in-a-generation project heralded one of the largest economic, social and environmental development initiatives of our time.

A creator of wealth and jobs, the Plan Nord provides a unique opportunity for Québec to revive its economy and flourish in a new international economic context that is characterized by open markets and the signing of national and international trade and cooperation agreements.

It is also an exceptional opportunity for local and aboriginal populations to participate actively in the implementation of projects intended to improve their quality of life with respect to employment, education, housing, health and culture.

The relaunching of the Plan Nord

To continue this major sustainable development project and to take advantage of the opportunities it offers, the government has decided to relaunch the Plan Nord and to make it one of the primary focus areas in the revival of Québec's economy, as announced in the 2014-2015 budget speech.[2]

The Plan Nord is an essential element in the revival of Québec's economy, along with the closely related Maritime Strategy. These two primary focus areas are complementary and cover some of the same geographic areas and key issues. The increased use of maritime routes and harbour facilities will, in particular, improve the flow of goods to northern Québec and make supplies for remote or isolated populations more secure, while supporting economic growth in outlying regions.

The relaunching of the Plan Nord will require the participation of local and aboriginal communities, in keeping with the principles of sustainable development and in a manner respectful of their culture and identities. Its benefits will be optimized to ensure that they are profitable for all regions of Québec.

The release of *The Plan Nord toward 2035*, 2015-2020 Action Plan is a key step in the process designed to rally all Quebecers behind this society-wide project.

The updated Plan Nord will constitute an adaptable framework for future years. Other projects suggested by communities or resulting from an analysis of the issues by various government departments and agencies may also, over the years, be added to this document provided they are consistent with the key policy directions of the Plan Nord.

1 Québec. Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune. *Plan Nord. Building Northern Québec Together.* The Project of a Generation. Québec, 2011.

2 Québec. Ministère des Finances. *2014-2015 Budget.* Budget speech. Delivered by Carlos Leitão, Minister of Finance, June 4, 2014. Québec, June 2014.

Waterfall at Lac à l'Eau Claire in Parc national de Tursujuq.
Credit: David Rousseau

The government is making the updated Plan Nord public in all of its economic, social and environmental dimensions. Within the same 2035 timeframe as before, it proposes a renewed vision and policy directions, as well as an updated governance structure and a 5-year action plan for 2015-2020.

The first chapter presents the context for the Plan Nord and reviews the progress that has been made by the government and its partners since the release of the initial Plan Nord up to the present. It also reconsiders the major challenges that northern Québec still faces.

The second chapter sets out the government's renewed vision for the next 20 years with respect to the Plan Nord, as well as the fundamental principles and policy directions that will guide its actions.

The three following chapters focus on the three major dimensions of the Plan Nord, namely the development of the North's economic potential, the development and wellbeing of communities, environmental protection and biodiversity conservation. It presents the long-term objectives that the government is pursuing in each field of action and the priority actions that it plans to take to reach its objectives between 2015 and 2020.

The sixth chapter outlines the conditions required to guarantee the successful implementation of the Plan Nord and its 2015-2020 Action Plan. The seventh chapter describes the implementation framework and governance structure and the specific approach that will apply to each region and its population. Last, the eighth and final chapter addresses the financial framework that has been established to ensure the project's success.

Otish Mountains.
Credit: TQ/J-F Bergeron

1.1 A solid foundation based on past achievements

The relaunching of the Plan Nord takes the initial plan as its starting point. It has benefited greatly from the work and reflections of the partners who contributed to the plan that was made public in 2011, and more specifically the involvement of the Partners' Discussion Table and the aboriginal Partners' Discussion Table. It is important to note that the initial Plan Nord resulted from more than 60 meetings of sectoral work groups and focus groups in which more than 450 people participated, including representatives from the aboriginal nations concerned. The updated Plan Nord also takes into account the work groups' discussions of northern development issues over the course of three years from 2011 to 2014.

With its updated Plan Nord, the government intends to continue to work in the spirit of the Declaration of the Partners signed in May 2011.

In addition, the implementation of the updated Plan Nord must, and will always, be consistent with previously signed agreements and all the government's obligations toward Aboriginals, including the constitutional obligation of consultation. The Québec government considers it a duty to honour its commitments toward the First nations and the Inuit, to accommodate them where necessary, and to establish a partnership with them in a form that reflects their aspirations and the realities they face.

The relaunching of the Plan Nord is based on the actions proposed by the government in 2011—which have been updated—and on new provisions announced primarily as part of the 2014-2015 Budget. The project has gained fresh momentum from:

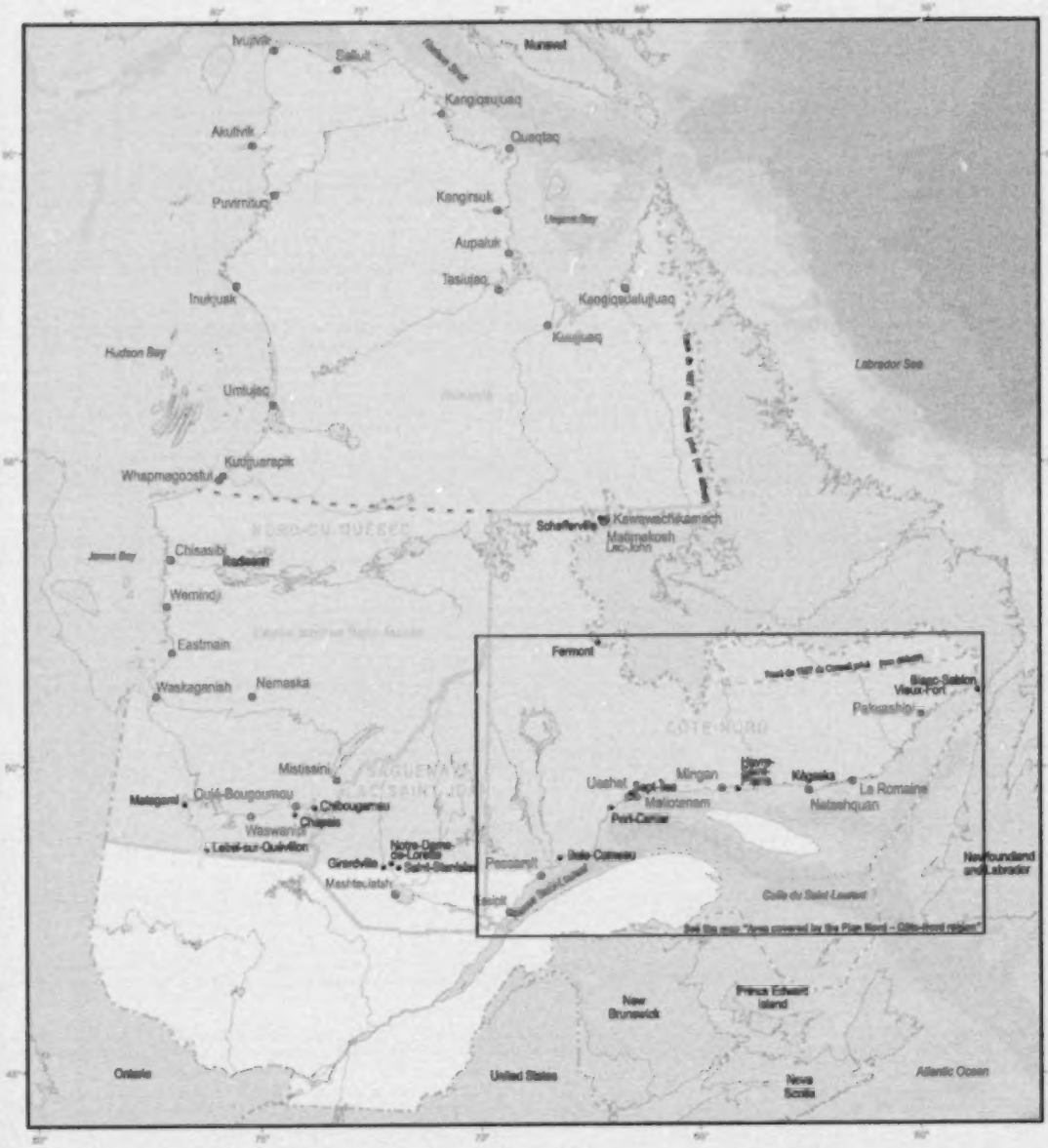
- The establishment, by government order, of a ministerial committee for the Plan Nord, which will allow the 14 ministers concerned to play an active role in the relaunching of the Plan Nord (see the list of members in Appendix 1).

- The creation of the Société du Plan Nord, whose mandate is to coordinate development of the area in collaboration with all partners involved, and to structure government interventions with the government departments and bodies concerned.
- The establishment of a marketing office as part of the Société du Plan Nord, whose object is to create a link between enterprises in Québec, including aboriginal enterprises, and ordering parties concerning the goods and services required for various projects in the area covered by the Plan Nord.
- The maintenance of the Fonds du Plan Nord, a fund dedicated to financing strategic infrastructures, social measures and measures supporting the development and protection of the region.
- The confirmation of the creation of the Mining and Hydrocarbon Capital Fund, to make new investments in enterprises that mine mineral substances forming part of the domain of the State, in addition to the funds available to Ressources Québec.
- The establishment of the Institut nordique du Québec to put Québec at the forefront of research and innovation in Nordic areas.
- Strategic investments to promote northern development and access to the region, such as the injection of new funds into training for aboriginal populations living in the regions covered by the Plan Nord, the completion of a study on the new rail link to improve access to the Labrador Trough, and the supply of natural gas to the area covered by the Plan Nord.
- Continuation of the *Québec Tourism Strategy North of the 49th parallel: cultures and wilderness to discover*, first announced in November 2011.
- By 2035, dedicating 50% of the area covered by the Plan Nord to non-industrial purposes, protection of the environment and the safeguarding of biodiversity.

The content of the updated Plan Nord was recently presented to the Assembly of Partners, newly established by the Act respecting the Société du Plan Nord. In addition, focused and thematic information sessions with socioeconomic stakeholders and the client base took place in the fall of 2014 in each of the regions covered by the Plan Nord.

In short, the government is relaunching the project from where it has been left off. The updated Plan Nord reiterates the essential elements of the initial plan which remain of current interest, and updates them either by maintaining the relevant policy directions and priority actions, or by proposing new ways forward to reflect the current context.

Map 1 - Area covered by the Plan Nord



Spatial organization

- Aboriginal community
- Municipality
- Village
- Administrative boundary region
- Dividing line between the Eeyou Istchee Baie-James territory and Nunavik
- Area covered by the Plan Nord

Nunavik is located in the Nord-du-Québec region and designates a sociocultural region.

Borders

- International border
- Interprovincial border
- Québec – Newfoundland and Labrador border (non-definitive)

Sources

Data	Organization	Year
Spatial organization	MERN	2015

Production

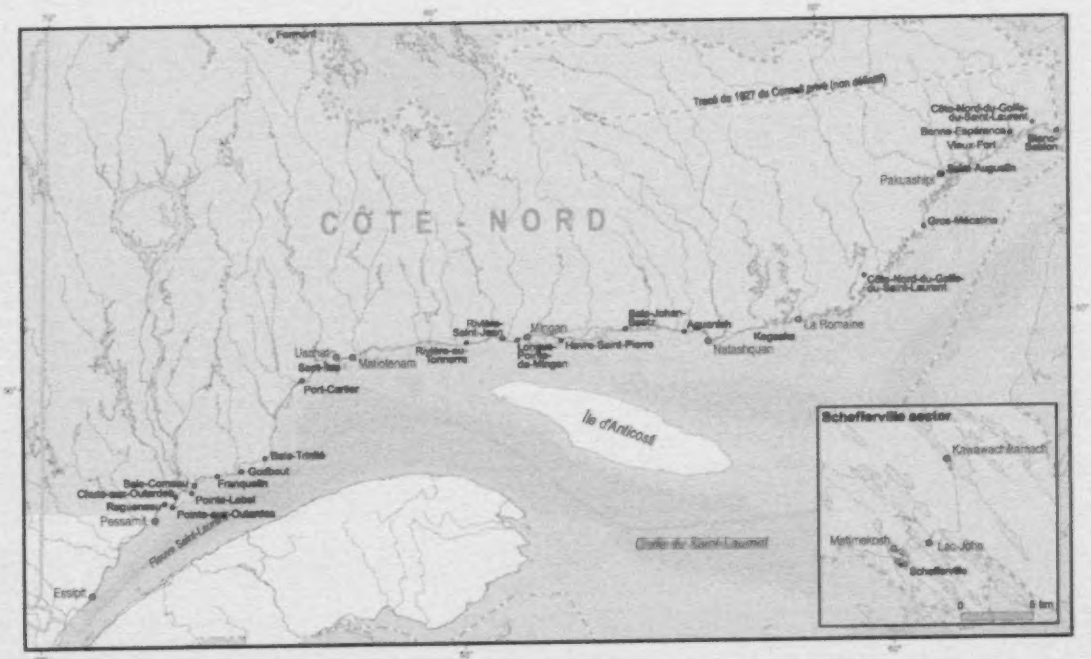
Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles
Direction générale de l'information géographique

Note: This document has no legal value.

© Gouvernement du Québec, 2015

0 200 km

Map 2 - Area covered by the Plan Nord – Côte-Nord region



Spatial organization

- Aboriginal community
- Municipality
- Village
- Administrative region boundary
- Area covered by the Plan Nord

Transportation infrastructures

- Paved road
- Gravel road

Borders

- International border
- Interprovincial border
- Québec – Newfoundland and Labrador border (non-definitive)

Sources

Data	Organization	Year
Spatial organization	MERN	2015
Transportation infrastructures	MERN	2014

Production

Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles
Direction générale de l'information géographique

Note: This document has no legal value.

© Gouvernement du Québec, 2015

1.2 Area covered by the Plan Nord and key features

The renewed Plan Nord will apply to the same geographical area as the initial plan, namely all of Québec located north of the 49th parallel and north of the St. Lawrence River and Gulf of St. Lawrence, an area of almost 1.2 million km² that constitutes 72% of Québec's total land mass (Maps 1 and 2).

Most of the area is governed by the Baie-James and Northern Québec Agreement and the Northeastern Québec Agreement, two treaties that establish aboriginal rights.[3]

It has a population of over 120,000 people, of whom one-third are Aboriginals from four nations (Inuit, Cree, Innu and Naskapi), living in 31 communities (Map 3). There are also 32 non-aboriginal communities in the Baie-James, north of Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean and Côte-Nord regions.

The area of the Plan Nord is rich in natural resources:

- It is the site of 75% of Québec's installed hydroelectric capacity and has further untapped potential for hydroelectric, wind and solar energy generation.
- It has over 200,000 km² of forests, or over half of all the productive forest land in Québec.
- The area covered by the Plan Nord contains numerous mineral deposits, currently accounting for all the nickel, cobalt, platinum group elements, zinc, iron ore and ilmenite produced in Québec. It is also a source of apatite, diamonds, lithium, vanadium, rare earths and graphite.
- With landscapes containing outstanding wildlife potential and a range of local cultures, it has the potential to become a world-class tourism destination.

1.3 Known issues

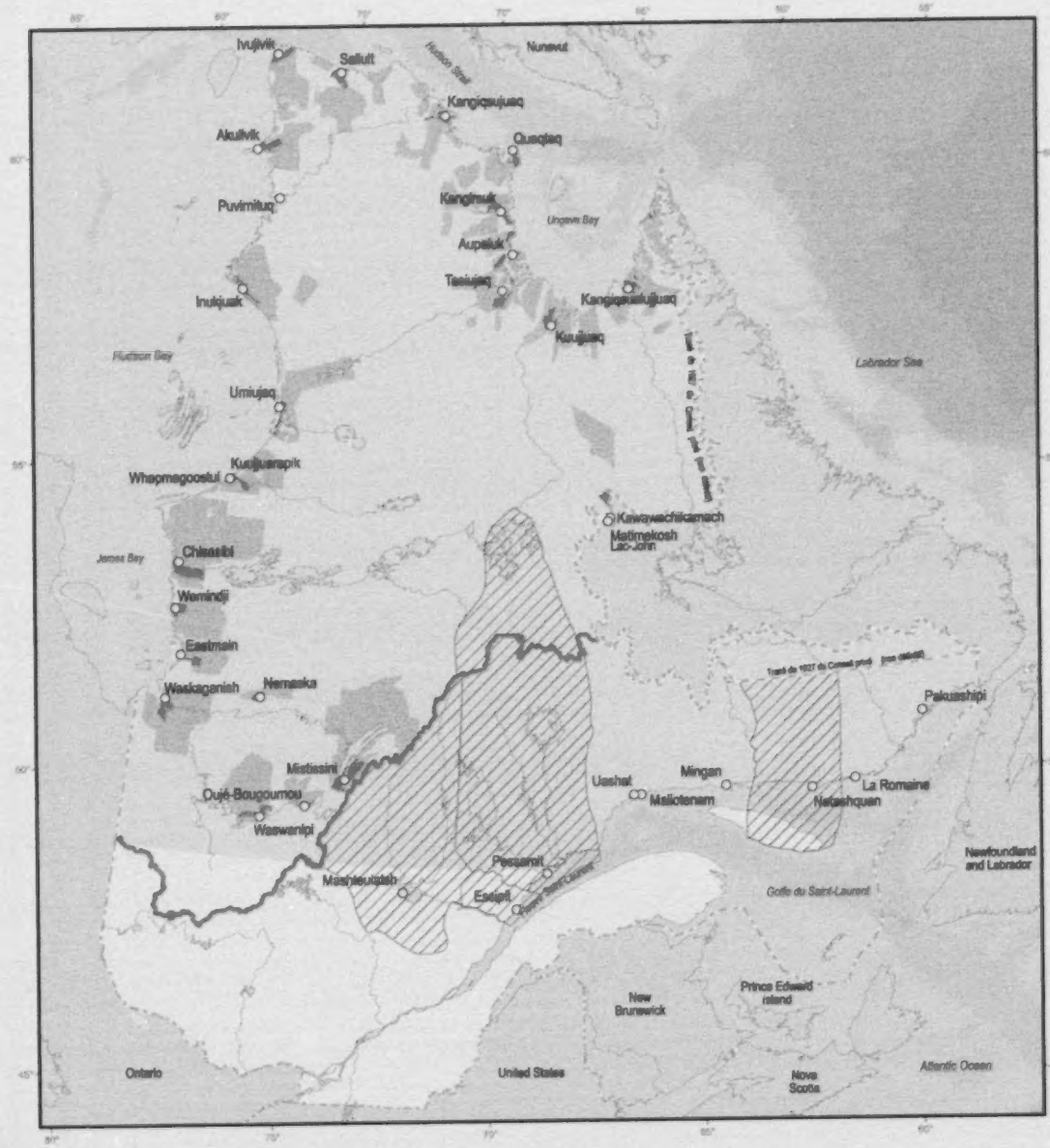
The area covered by the Plan Nord presents a range of challenges created by its geographic, demographic, social and environmental features. The major challenges are connected with:

- Abundant, diversified natural resources that are hard to access and are located in a distinctive, often fragile environment that deserves special attention.
- An immense, sparsely populated area with small, scattered communities, half of which are aboriginal and have sometimes fallen behind in terms of service provision and living conditions.
- A dynamic occupation of the area by people who play an active role in the socio-economic development of their community.
- The gathering of knowledge and commissioning of research to ensure more effective planning of environmentally respectful work.

The analyses, discussions and consultations conducted as part of the initial Plan Nord helped create a better understanding of the nature of the issues and to define their scope. Based on this portrait of the northern reality and taking into account the result of the meetings held in the fall of 2014 with the partners concerned—including regional stakeholders, aboriginal nations, environmental associations and the business sector—the government is proposing a vision for 2035 and updated policy directions for the Plan Nord to adapt them to its priorities and the issues at hand.

3 List of agreements signed by nation and by community. Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones. [Online][www.autochtones.gouv.qc.ca/relations_autochtones/ententes/liste_ententes_conclues.htm].

Map 3 - Aboriginal communities



Area covered by the Plan Nord

Spatial organization

- Aboriginal community
- Southern limit of land under agreement
- Category I lands
- Category II lands
- Nitassinan as defined in the EPOG

Borders

- International border
- Interprovincial border
- Québec – Newfoundland and Labrador border (non-definitive)

Sources

Data	Organization	Year
Spatial organization	MERN	2014

Production

Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles
Direction générale de l'information géographique

Note: This document has no legal value.

© Gouvernement du Québec, 2015

0 200 km

Northern landscape.
Credit: David Rouault

MAIN POLICY DIRECTIONS

2.1 A vision for 2015-2035

By 2035, the Plan Nord will have enabled the development of this rich resources area, for the benefit of its populations and of the whole of Québec, through an exemplary form of sustainable development based on a comprehensive, integrated, consistent and responsible approach.

This renewed vision for the Plan Nord indicates the path to follow over the next 20 years to make the plan a reality. It sheds light on the principles that must guide the actions and future decisions of the government so that all parties work together to reach a shared objective.

2.2 Basic principles

The government wants to ensure that resource development in the North is conducted in a way that benefits the population living in the area and contributes to progress in Québec as a whole. It is concerned that development in the area should be supported by local and aboriginal communities and be socially acceptable. It also wants the process to be part of an exemplary sustainable development approach that preserves the natural riches of the land and resources in the North, as well as its potential uses, for generations to come.

For this reason, four basic principles have been established, on the basis of shared values, to guide the government's actions by ensuring:

- A planned, coordinated project based on partnership, private-sector investment and support for communities, in particular through the creation of the Société du Plan Nord.
- A focus on sustainable development that integrates the economic, social and environmental dimensions.
- Government actions adapted to the realities of local and aboriginal communities and to northern areas in general.
- A harmonious and ethical approach to development that remains respectful of aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities and consistent with equality between men and women.

Under these principles, projects will be conducted in a transparent manner and in collaboration with local stakeholders. An innovative consultation process involving local players in decisions and projects will ensure the social acceptability of development in the North. This process will respect the Québec government's constitutional obligations with respect to aboriginal consultations.

All of the necessary steps will be taken so that Québec draws the greatest possible benefit from the development of its natural heritage within the framework of a sustainable development process. A focus on protecting the environment and conserving the biodiversity that is unique to the North will be at the heart of all decisions.

Government programs and services will also help to take the particularities of the regions into account and may be adapted so that northern communities have access to services approaching those provided elsewhere in Québec.

The government is committed to ensuring that local communities reap concrete benefits from the development of the North by promoting the establishment and retention of new residents, job creation and business opportunities for enterprises. Everything will be put in place with the goal of supporting the development of local and aboriginal communities.

2.3 Updated policy directions

The policy directions that will guide the implementation of the Plan Nord up to 2035 and, more specifically, for the 2015-2020 period, address the three fundamental dimensions of the plan: economic development, the wellbeing of local and aboriginal communities, and the protection of the environment and conservation of biodiversity.

Based on the long-term vision and the fundamental principles it has established, the government will implement three key strategic policy directions to guide its approach and that of its partners:

- Develop the diversified economic potential of northern Québec in a responsible way and for the benefit of the population living there and Québec as a whole.
- Support the development of all communities in the area covered by the Plan Nord, by helping them realize their full potential and enhancing their living conditions.
- Protect the environment and preserve the distinctive biodiversity of northern Québec by ensuring that mechanisms are put in place to dedicate 50% of the area covered by the Plan Nord, by 2035, to non-industrial purposes, protection of the environment and the safeguarding of biodiversity.

Tugliq Energie wind turbine at Raglan Mine in Nunavik.
Credit: Raglan

The area covered by the Plan Nord has seen several years of major economic growth, mainly due to investments made in the mineral resources sector to meet strong international demand for metals.

The Côte-Nord and Nord-du-Québec regions employed more than 52,000 people in 2013. Since the global recession in 2009, GDP (gross domestic product) in these regions has grown more rapidly than anywhere else in Québec. It is estimated that it neared $11 billion in 2013.[4]

Between 2007 and 2012, private investments in northern Québec more than tripled, reaching an exceptional level of nearly $4.5 billion. Over the course of the same period, private investments increased by only 15% in the rest of Québec.

More recently, the weak global demand for certain metals, especially iron, has made investment levels drop. According to the estimates available for 2013 and 2014, investments should nevertheless remain at a historically high level of more than $2 billion.[5]

This level of investments is mainly attributable to the investments made in the mineral resources sector and in hydroelectric facilities. Furthermore, forestry, wildlife activities, tourism and the bio-food industry also play a leading role in the economic activity of some communities in the area covered by the Plan Nord.

4 Preliminary estimate from the Institut de la statistique du Québec: [Online] [www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/statistiques/economie/comptes-economiques/comptes-production/pib_ra_2007-2013.htm].

5 Institut de la statistique du Québec: [Online] [www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/statistiques/economie/investissements/prives-publics/ipp_priv.htm].

3.1 Objectives for 2035

To develop the North's economic potential, the Plan Nord will target six objectives:

- Promote the responsible development of natural resources in the North.
- Count on the diversity of natural resources, especially in the mineral sector.
- Promote private investment.
- Increase the processing of resources from the North within Québec.
- Promote the diversification of the local and regional economy, in particular by supporting enterprises of all sizes and at all stages of development.
- Maximize economic benefits in the area covered by the Plan Nord and throughout Québec.

These objectives reflect the government's intention to develop the economic potential of the North by adapting to a context in which natural resources, and particularly mineral resources, largely depend on global economic conditions, market volatility and price cycles.

The objectives are driven by the need to develop the area's natural resources responsibly and to protect the integrity of the region for generations to come. They also demonstrate the government's resolve to profit from a down cycle to start creating a favourable climate for investment. This will be accomplished by taking concrete action—for example, with respect to the region's access infrastructures—in order to create the conditions necessary for success. In addition, the government will promote the development of resources other than iron, in other words resources with a more stable value and more favourable market conditions. It intends to act as a partner through increased participation in large mining projects for the benefit of Québec as a whole and for future generations.

It is also committed to promoting an increase in the processing of natural resources in Québec.

Through Hydro-Québec, the government will continue to focus on the immense energy potential of the northern regions.

By focusing its objectives on the North's economic potential, the government also aims to stimulate private investment and diversify the local and regional economy by supporting innovative and promising sectors. Through the Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et des Exportations (MEIE), it will continue to encourage the development of the seven niches of excellence identified within the framework of the ACCORD project, which were agreed on with regional stakeholders.

The State must establish a business climate conducive to investment by improving, optimizing and simplifying its processes in order to support the creation and growth of enterprises. The MEIE will work with the Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MTESS) and Investissement Québec to set up a user-friendly, one-stop service under the "Entreprises Québec" banner to assist entrepreneurs and enterprises during the administrative process and for all Québec government programs and services.

The MEIE will establish a coordinating committee bringing together its regional offices in the territory covered by the Plan Nord, as well as central offices, to ensure that the needs of enterprises working in the region are taken into account in an efficient manner.

In addition, the MEIE will provide support for major projects. At the request of promoters, it will coordinate interdepartmental committees to help move their projects through the public administration process. This one-stop access point will allow stakeholders to identify the issues raised by a project and ensure that problems are resolved.

The deployment of the Plan Nord constitutes a powerful lever for the consolidation and development of SMEs in the region, as well as the other enterprises that will reap benefits throughout Québec.

Mining and metallurgy, power generation and forestry play a dominant role in economic activities in the area covered by the Plan Nord. These sectors require expert support in terms of specialized technical services, professional services, machinery, transportation services, research and development and engineering consulting. In addition to creating thousands of jobs, large companies working in the region will provide many key opportunities for a large number of SMEs—suppliers, subcontractors and manufacturers—elsewhere in Québec.

The SMEs, subcontractors, and equipment suppliers who wish to benefit from these business opportunities will have access to a marketing office to connect them with the ordering parties.

3.2 Priority actions for 2015-2020

To ensure the development of the natural resources in the area covered by the Plan Nord, the government has established six major priority actions for the period up to 2020 in the mining, forestry, energy, wildlife, tourism and bio-food sectors.

3.2.1 Re-establish a context conducive to mineral development based on a wide range of resources

Mining has already created a large number of jobs in the area covered by the Plan Nord, but could create more in a more favourable worldwide economic context. In addition to the 12,700 existing jobs in mining, the 17 mining projects at the deposit appraisal and development stages could:

- Generate more than $22 billion in investments.
- Create over 10,000 jobs during the construction phase.
- Generate 9,730 jobs each year during the production phase.

In 2013, more than 236 exploration projects were listed in the area covered by the Plan Nord. These projects are mainly located in the administrative regions of Nord-du-Québec, Côte-Nord, the northern limits of Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean. Not all will be implemented, but it is clear that the mining sector will contribute to Québec's economic growth in the coming years provided the context is conducive to its expansion.

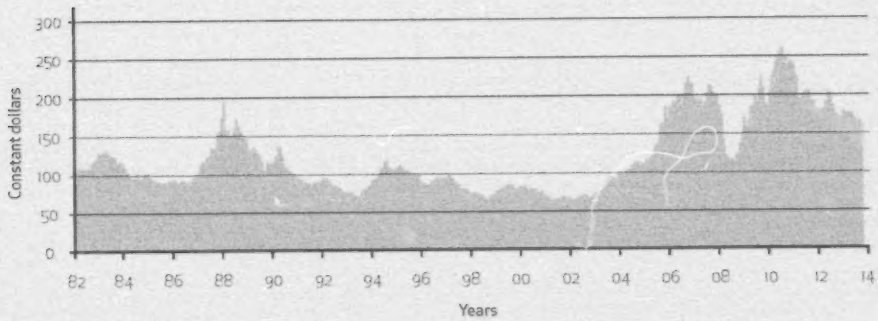
Conditions needed to develop mineral potential

The successful development of mineral potential in the North must address the need to provide a stable, predictable operating framework, a transparent and open process, worker training programs adapted to the sector, accessible and high-quality geo-scientific information, incentives for investment and increased partnerships with aboriginal communities.

A stable and predictable framework

The mining sector is cyclical and capital intensive. Between 1982 and 2004, international prices for metals remained relatively stable within the same range of values (Figure 1). However, starting in 2006, prices began to rise and fluctuate widely, mainly due to strong economic growth in China. This strong growth had a positive effect on investments, which increased over the course of this period to peak in 2012 with more than $5 billion in mining investments in Québec.

Figure 1 - Metal price index, May 1982 to May 2014 (constant 2012 dollars)



Source: International Monetary Fund

This is why the sector needs, above all, a stable and predictable business context. The development and operation of a mine require long-term planning. The mining investments that are made today aim to keep a mine in operation for many years. Stability and predictability in a mine's operating conditions are essential in order to attract the large investments required and make the potential benefits of this sector a reality for Québec's economy.

After several months of instability in Québec's mining sector, the government has worked diligently to re-establish conditions conducive to the development of mines in Québec.

- To this end, the government has maintained the application of the mining tax regime announced on May 6, 2013.[6] In force since January 1, 2014, the goal of the regime is to increase the benefits generated by mining for the whole of Québec. It is based on the principle that all active mines must pay royalties.
- In addition, with the passage of the new Mining Act in December 2013, the rules governing mining activities are known, clear and stable. The Act aims primarily to maximize the benefits of mining projects in Québec, to better protect the environment and to ensure the social acceptability of projects.

6. Québec. Stimulate Mining Investment. A New Mining Tax Regime Fair for All. Québec, May 2013. [Online][www.finances.gouv.qc.ca/documents/Communiques/en/COMEN_20130506.pdf].

A transparent and open process

The conditions conducive to mining development are not only economic—they are also social and environmental. The establishment of a process characterized by transparency and collaboration constitutes a fundamental condition that must be created to accelerate development in the mining sector and obtain support from the various parties concerned by development.

This is why the government has acted swiftly to establish a mining advisory committee. The committee, coordinated by the Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles (MERN), is responsible for submitting recommendations to the government to support mining development for the benefit of all. It is comprised of representatives of the various parties concerned by the mining development, including representatives from the mining sector, the municipal sector, social and environmental groups, training and research organizations, and the government. It provides a forum for the discussion and debate of mining development issues and the government's intentions.

The MERN also provides a support service for promoters that:

- Associates communities with the development of mineral resources in an integrated approach.
- Informs promoters of the various legal and regulatory obligations with which they must comply when developing mining projects in Québec.
- Presents promoters with the Québec government's expectations with respect to sustainable development and the resource persons from the various government departments and bodies with whom they must collaborate to develop a project.
- The government will ensure the compatibility of land uses and the social acceptability of natural resource extraction projects.

In this way, the government will obtain high quality information about the development of mining projects throughout Québec.

A comprehensive range of training programs adapted to the sector's needs

The government created the Institut national des mines[7] in May 2009 to support it in the exercise of its responsibilities concerning education in the mining sector. The institute will:

- Coordinate actions at each of the various levels of education to meet training needs and workforce requirements in the mining sector.
- Assess current and future training needs in the mining sector and monitor them on an ongoing basis to determine changes in their nature and geographic distribution.
- Submit proposals to the Minister of Education, Higher Education and Research with a view to updating the training supply.
- Participate actively in efforts to promote mining sector trades and professions.

7 Institut national des mines. [Online] [www.inmq.qc.ca].

To ensure that professional training meets development needs north of the 49th parallel, specifically those of the mining sector, the government has chosen to invest in diverse training measures presented in section 4.2.2, "Train more specialized workers to meet the needs of development projects in the area covered by the Plan Nord".

Accessible and high-quality geo-scientific information

The mission of Géologie Québec is to acquire, process and distribute geo-scientific knowledge throughout Québec. A total of $12 million per year is dedicated to this mission. The acquisition of geo-scientific knowledge is a key element in the mining sector because it helps identify mineral potential in order to justify investments in mineral exploration.

The distribution of this information increases the efficiency and effectiveness of mineral exploration work by private companies and helps increase the chances of making a discovery.

To facilitate information access, this geo-scientific data is uploaded to the Système d'information géominière (SIGÉOM), a databank containing an interactive map that is available to the public. This work is in addition to the work carried out by other government actors, including the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques (MDDELCC) and the Ministère des Transports (MTQ), to characterize Québec's land base. This data is also useful when making decisions regarding the development of public land to ensure that various land uses are considered.

The Fonds du Plan Nord will help accelerate the acquisition, processing and distribution of geo-scientific information, specifically to help attain the objective set for 2035 of designating 50% of the territory covered by the Plan Nord for non-industrial purposes, the protection of the environment and the safeguarding of biodiversity.

Incentives for mining investments and increased transformation

Québec intends to capitalize on the mining of new substances, such as lithium, rare earths and graphite, to gain expertise in transformation processes and to develop sectors related to high-end technology and the technologies needed for the electrification of the transportation sector.

To achieve this goal, Québec offers a series of fiscal measures, including allocations for processing and transformation and a 10-year tax exemption for major investment projects. It also offers the possibility of investing in companies that mine mineral substances on public land, or that process such substances in Québec, via the Mining and Hydrocarbon Capital Fund. Added to these measures is the possibility of benefiting from advantageous power rates.

MINING AND HYDROCARBON CAPITAL FUND

In the mining sector, financing a project is a major challenge. In its most recent budget, the government confirmed the creation of the Mining and Hydrocarbon Capital Fund to ensure equity investments in mining, oil and gas companies. A $500 million envelope was reserved for the fund for the area covered by the Plan Nord, to be managed by Ressources Québec.

The MERN, the Minister of Finance and the MEIE are jointly developing an investment policy to regulate the Fund's financial transactions. The policy will be subject to government approval.

Last, it is important to note that under the Mining Act,[8] applications for mining leases or for the renewal of a mining lease must be accompanied by a scoping and market study as regards processing in Québec. The government may also require a maximization of the economic spinoffs from mining operations in Québec.

Enhanced partnerships with aboriginal communities

The MERN contributes to two aboriginal mining funds: the Cree Mineral Exploration Board (Crees) and the Nunavik Mineral Exploration Fund (Inuit). One of the mandates of these funds is to introduce residents in the communities to mining activities through awareness campaigns, initiation activities and contact meetings concerning geology and activities related to mineral exploration.

The funds, supported and directed by the communities, play an important role in the assistance they provide for mining companies that wish to carry out work in the region. They also have implications for communities and their understanding of mining development in their region.

The Restor-Action Nunavik Fund, which provides funding for the cleanup of mineral exploration sites, was established in partnership with industry stakeholders. The Québec government and the Kativik Regional Government are participating in the project in partnership with the fund. Agreements are also being negotiated for the cleanup of mineral exploration sites in the Eeyou Istchee Baie-James territory. The abandoned Mine Principale site located in the territory used by the Oujé-Bougoumou community and the territory of the city of Chibougamau will be restored in partnership with the communities concerned. The economic benefits of these projects for northern communities are estimated to be $100 million.

8 Mining Act. [Online] [www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=2&file=/M_13_1/M13_1_A.html].

A new approach for the mining sector

Drawing on its expertise in geology and geological, mining and metallurgical engineering, the MERN recently embarked on a process to develop a strategic and renewed vision for mining development. This process is based on an inclusive and mobilizing vision for all partners. The new approach focuses on:

- The identification of high-potential, strategic resources.
- The priority granted to structuring industries.
- The identification of potential for processing and value-added products that are in demand on the market.
- The development of a network of world class suppliers and equipment manufacturers in Québec.
- The positioning of Québec as a leader in the field of sustainable development.
- The identification of the conditions for success.

This approach will help make the immense potential of the territory a reality. The government will be able to capitalize on an industry that has already taken concrete and meaningful actions to encourage the sustainable and responsible development of the mining sector. Increased awareness in the mineral exploration and extraction communities of environmental concerns and the importance of social acceptability has already encouraged mining companies to voluntarily adopt rules on best practices.

For example, the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada has developed a guide on environmental excellence in exploration *(e3)* which provides mineral exploration companies with information and advice for adopting the best environmental and socioeconomic practices.

Similarly, the Québec Mining Association has opted in to the initiative "*Towards Sustainable Mining*", a program designed to gradually improve the environmental and social practices of Canadian mining companies using precise indicators.

In addition, the Québec Mineral Exploration Association (QMEA), in collaboration with the UQAT-UQAM Chair in Mining Entrepreneurship, Groupe MISA, and other QMEA member companies, is finalizing a voluntary certification process for the Québec mineral exploration industry. This will allow companies to obtain certification according to the principles of sustainable development.

Potential for development

The area covered by the Plan Nord contains numerous mineral deposits. It currently accounts for all the nickel, cobalt, platinum group elements, zinc, iron ore and ilmenite produced in Québec. It is also the source of a large part of Québec's precious metal production, mainly in the form of gold.

The area covered by the Plan Nord also has enormous undeveloped potential for apatite, lithium, vanadium, diamond, graphite and rare earth elements.

- Lithium, vanadium and graphite are used in many industries, including energy, transportation and the high-technology sector, and therefore have major potential for growth. The mining of graphite opens the door to graphene production which in itself constitutes a revolution in the field of information technology. Due to its high electrical conductivity, graphene could take the place of silicon transistors, opening the way to high-performing computers that are even faster and smaller.
- The rare earth elements (17 in total) are mainly used in metal alloys and additives, batteries, catalysts, ceramics, electronics, fertilizers, glass additives, polishing powders, lamps, lasers, magnets and medical and pharmaceutical applications.
- Some rare earth elements are considered strategic in many industrial applications. The global demand for rare earth elements is on the rise and market prospects are promising.
- The industry is not only looking to extract mineral resources, but also to process and separate rare earth elements using a clean and innovative process to obtain an added-value product.
- The electrification of the transportation sector is one of the major business opportunities for many of these industrial metals and minerals. Their use is growing and international demand is increasing.
- Many of these mining projects aim to create innovative processing and treatment processes. This will allow Québec to perfect its expertise, including in green technologies, and to develop mining processes that leave a smaller environmental footprint. It will then be able to position itself as a leader on the international stage.
- The 10 operating mines and 17 mining projects located in the area covered by the Plan Nord highlight the future potential of Québec's mineral industry, specifically in the rare earths domain, currently at the deposit appraisal stage when development opportunities are determined (Tables 1 and 2, Map 4).

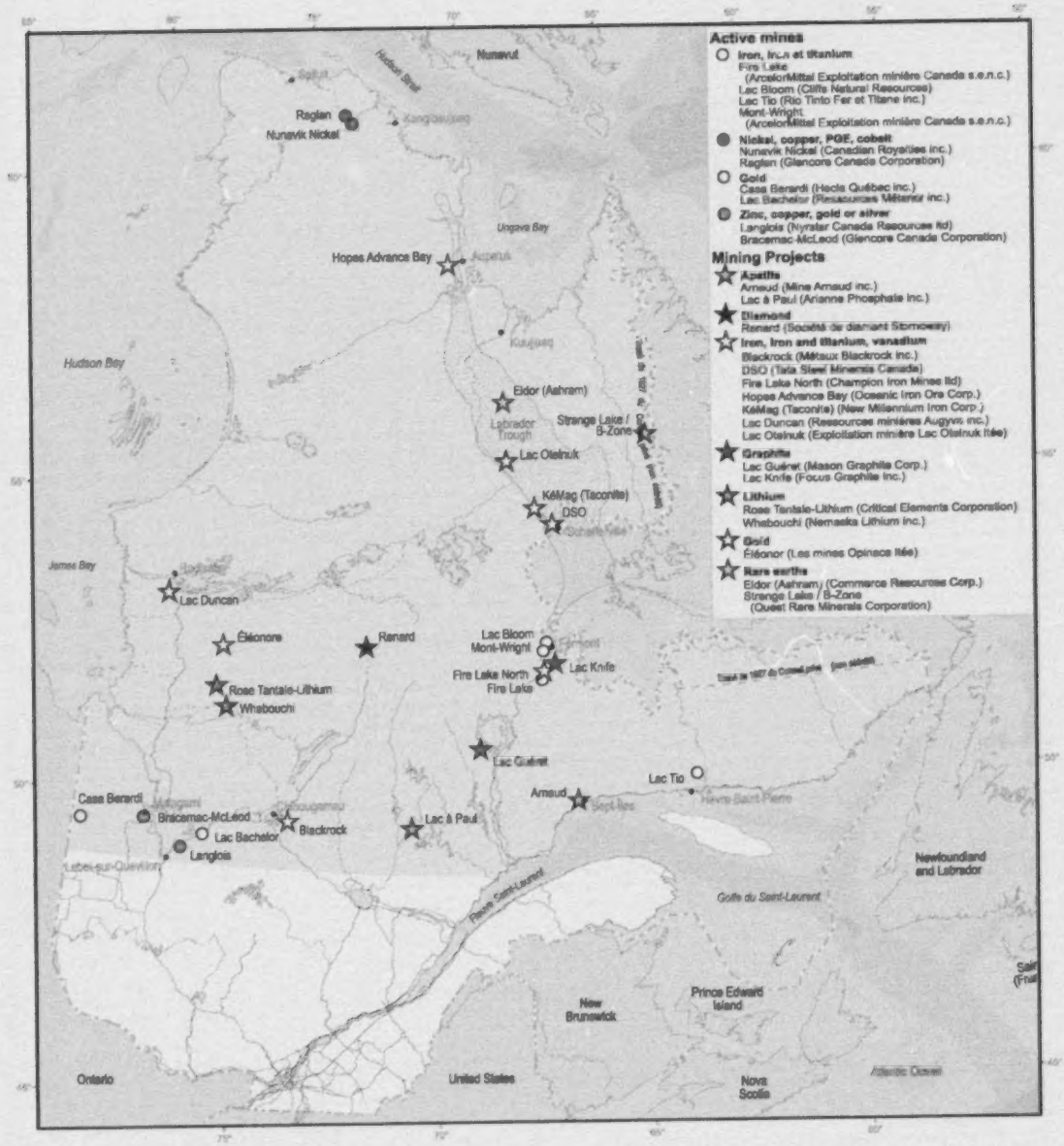
Table 1 - Mines in operation in the area covered by the Plan Nord

ACTIVE MINE	COMPANY	SUBSTANCE
Mont Wright	ArcelorMittal Mines Canada	Iron (concentrate/pellets)
Lac Bloom	Cliffs Natural Resources	Iron (concentrate)
Nunavik Nickel	Canadian Royalties	Nickel
Fire Lake	ArcelorMittal Mines Canada	Iron (ore)
Lac Tio	Rio Tinto Fer et Titane	Ilmenite (ore)
Raglan	Glencore Canada Corporation	Nickel (concentrate)
Casa Berardi	Hecla Québec	Gold (brick)
Lac Bachelor	Ressources Métanor	Gold (brick)
Langlois	Nyrstar	Zinc (concentrate)
Bracemac-McLeod	Glencore Canada Corporation	Zinc/copper (concentrate)

Table 2 - Mining projects in the area covered by the Plan Nord

MINE	COMPANY	SUBSTANCE
Rose Tantalum-Lithium	Critica Elements Corporation	Lithium (carbonate), tantalum (concentrate)
Whabouchi	Nemaska Lithium	Lithium (hydroxide and carbonate)
BlackRock	Métaux BlackRock	Iron/ilmenite (concentrate)
DSO	Tata Steel Minerals Canada	Iron (concentrate)
Fire Lake North	Champion Iron Mines	Iron (concentrate)
Hopes Advance Bay	Oceanic Iron Ore Corporation	Iron (concentrate)
KéMag Taconite	New Millenium Iron Corp.	Iron (concentrate)
Lac Duncan	Ressources minières Augyva	Iron (concentrate/pellets)
Lac Otelnuk	Lac Otelnuk Mining	Iron (concentrate)
Éléonore	Les Mines Opinaca	Gold (brick)
Arnaud	Mine Arnaud	Apatite (concentrate)
Lac à Paul	Arianne Phosphate	Apatite (concentrate)
Eldor Ashram	Commerce Resources	Rare earths (oxides)
Strange Lake/B-Zone	Quest Rare Minerals	Rare earths (oxides)
Renard	Stornoway Diamond Corporation	Diamond
Lac Guéret	Mason Graphite Corporation	Graphite
Lac Knife	Focus Graphite	Graphite

Map 4 - Active mines and mining projects in the area covered by the Plan Nord



2015-2020 PRIORITY ACTIONS IN THE MINING SECTOR

- Gather basic knowledge about the area covered by the Plan Nord to ensure the responsible development of mineral resources for current and future generations.
- Continue clean-up operations on mineral exploration sites in Nunavik pursuant to the agreement between Kativik Regional Government, Makivik Corporation, Fonds Restor Action and the Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles; sign similar agreements with regional government in the Eeyou Istchee Baie-James territory and restore the abandoned Mine Principale mine site. The government remains aware of the need to clean up other sites not covered by these agreements.
- Use the communication platform provided by Québec Mines to inform, consult, and promote discussions between the mining industry, the government, regional decision-makers and the general public on questions connected with mineral exploration and extraction.
- For diversification purposes, support projects to develop minerals such as diamond, apatite, ilmenite, graphite and rare earths.
- Take a stake in companies mining mineral substances on public land, or processing such substances in Québec, via the Mining and Hydrocarbon Capital Fund.

3.2.2 Diversify and promote products from the forest environment and implement integrated forest management methods

The boreal forest is one of the main vegetation zones in the area covered by the Plan Nord. It is made up of relatively dense stands of mainly softwood trees. Black spruce, the dominant species, is used for saw wood and the manufacture of high-strength engineered and structural timber products. It is also in demand for pulp, paper and specialty cardboard production (Map 5).

As of April 1, 2015, the annual allowable cut in the area covered by the Plan Nord is 11.8 million cubic metres of timber, representing 39% of the allowable cut in all of Québec's public forests. A total of 36 mills holding supply guarantees from public forests harvest timber in the area covered by the Plan Nord, and 9 are located in the area. These activities support around 12,500 jobs, including 3,700 in forestry and 8,800 in primary wood processing plants.

Since the coming into force of the Sustainable Forest Development Act[9] in April 2013, Québec has applied a modern, world-class forestry regime. It is based on a management strategy that meets the highest standards for sustainable forest management and fits perfectly into a large-scale sustainable development project such as the Plan Nord.

One of the effects of the new forest regime is to increase participation by local and aboriginal communities in the forest management process. It defines a management approach that respects the environment and biological diversity while providing more enterprises with access to timber resources. It also promotes secondary and tertiary timber processing and the emergence of projects that rally the support of all actors in the North.

The government intends to take full advantage of this new, favourable context to encourage the development of forestry resources. It will promote the expansion of the value-added wood product processing industry, including:

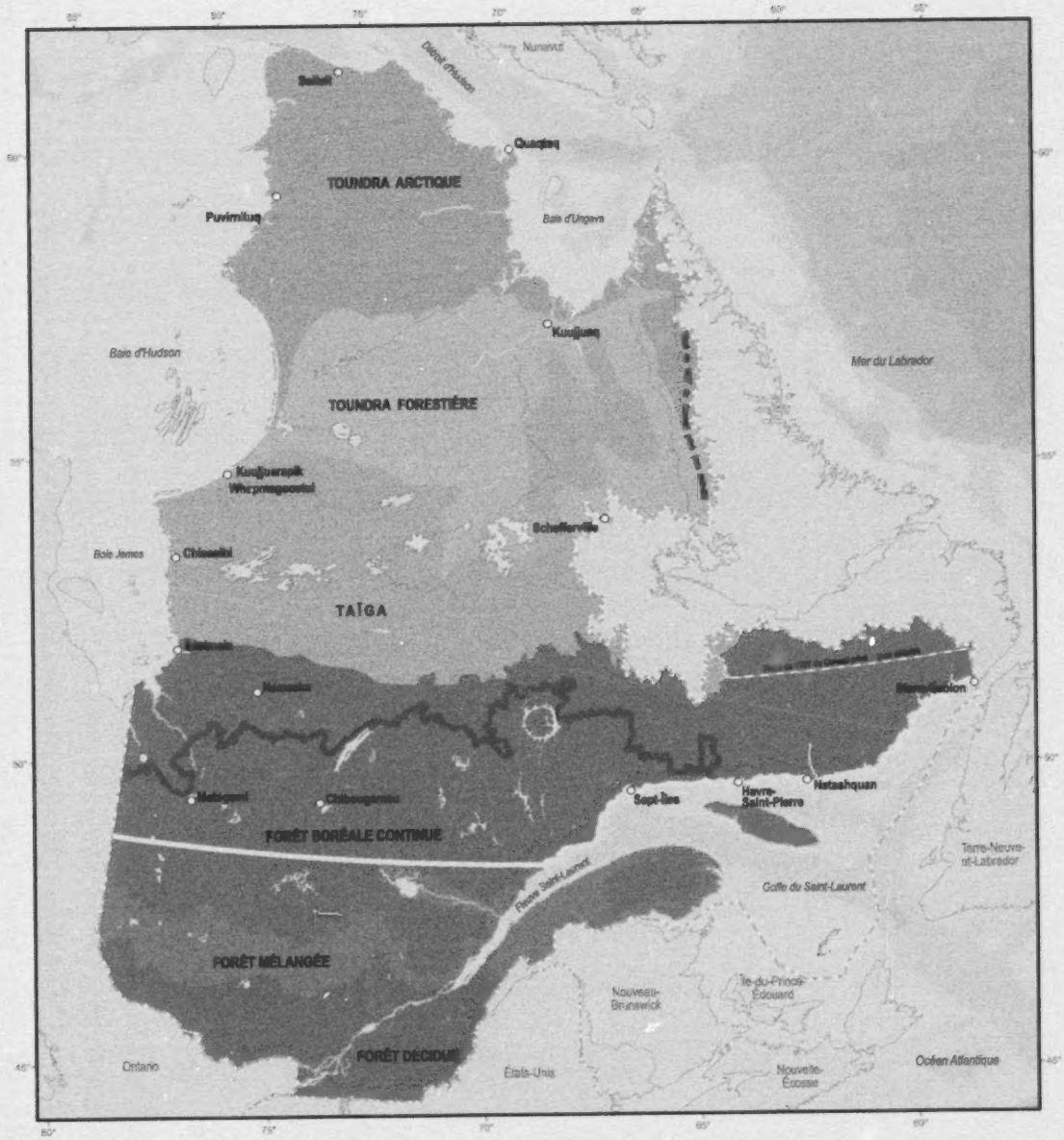
- **Forest biomass**[10] which has an annual harvest potential of 2 million bone-dry metric tonnes in Québec's public forests. It is mainly used to produce bioenergy.
- **Green building** offers a prominent place for wood products due to the fact that it is the best choice for the environment. In addition to being a renewable and plentiful resource, wood has the property of storing and trapping the carbon atoms present in CO_2, one of the greenhouse gases (GHG) at the root of climate change.
- **Biorefining** involves the transformation of lignocellulosic matter from the forest into a variety of commercial chemical products used to manufacture products such as bioplastics, solvents, paints and biosourced materials. This industry offers an excellent business opportunity to diversify forest products from the region covered by the Plan Nord and to create new markets. Many biorefining activities are compatible with paper and pulp factories that could increase their competitiveness by producing biofuels and basic chemicals.

These wood product processing industries are dynamic and seeing rapid growth. They require state of the art technologies to maximize the value of the forest products concerned. The government plans to take full advantage of this growth sector to create jobs in the area covered by the Plan Nord and to improve the quality of life of its inhabitants.

9 Sustainable Forest Development Act, R.S.Q., c. A-18.1.

10 Forest biomass includes residues resulting from the harvesting of wood (branches, crowns, foliage) and unused low quality wood from private and public forests. It is calculated in "bone-dry" metric tonnes, a term signifying that it does not contain any water.

Map 5 - Major vegetation zones



Limite sud du territoire du Plan Nord

Limite nordique des forêts attribuables

Frontières

Frontière internationale

Frontière interprovinciale

Frontière Québec – Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador (cette frontière n'est pas définitive)

Sources

Données	Organisme	Année
Divisions territoriales	MERN	2014
Zones de végétation	MERN	2014

Réalisation

Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles
Direction générale de l'information géographique

Note : Le présent document n'a aucune portée légale.

© Gouvernement du Québec, 2015

0 200 km

Forestry and aboriginal communities

The government is determined to ensure that the rights, interests, values and needs of aboriginal communities are taken into consideration. It also aims to support and increase their participation in forest management and development.

Discussions between Québec and the Crees began in November 2009 to harmonize the forestry regime in the *Agreement Concerning a New Relationship between Le Gouvernement du Québec and the Crees of Québec* (commonly referred to as the "Peace of the Brave") and the rules introduced by the Sustainable Forest Development Act. The Plan Nord and the signing of the *Agreement on Governance in the Eeyou Itschee Baie-James Territory* strongly influenced the progression of the discussions. The final aim of both parties is to established a collaborative regime for the management of forest resources.

Forestry on the Côte-Nord: a unique context

The Côte-Nord region is directly affected by developments in the forest industry. Despite the superior quality of the fibre from certain species, which gives the pulp and paper industry a market advantage, the industrial structure of the region's forestry sector is weakened by some non-cyclical factors.

The spruce budworm epidemic, the high proportion of balsam fir in the supply to sawmills and long transport distances have a strong influence on supply costs.

The government supports the forestry industry in the Côte-Nord region by providing financial assistance for the salvaging of timber affected by the spruce budworm attack, based on the degree of defoliation. In addition, it has implemented substantial regulatory reductions to allow the industry to increase the value of its finished products.

Access to forest land

Last, the regional access committee established in July 2014 will specifiy the responsibilities of various stakeholders, including the government, for the construction, repair and maintenance of multi-resource access roads. It will also specify how costs will be shared between the players, including the holders of timber supply guarantees.

Overall, under the supervision of the Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs (MFFP), the government intends to continue its efforts to maintain a high-performing, competitive wood products industry in the area covered by the Plan Nord.

2015-2020 PRIORITY ACTIONS IN THE FOREST SECTOR

- Promote the use of forest biomass in energy generation for the mining industry, isolated communities and cogeneration plants.
- Develop the potential for biorefining through the extraction of components from wood substances.
- Establish a cooperative system for the management of forest resources in the area covered by the "Peace of the Brave" agreement.
- Promote the development of a high-performance, competitive wood products industry on the Côte-Nord.

3.2.3 Continue to develop the North's energy potential

Québec and hydroelectricity are closely linked: hydro power is one of Québec's key advantages in dealing with competition from various organizations in the area of national and international economic development. Québec possesses 3% of the world's freshwater reserves, most of which are located on the tableland north of the 49th parallel.

For nearly a century, and in particular over the past 60 years, Québec has used this immense resource to generate clean, renewable energy. Hydroelectric development has contributed significantly to shaping the northern region of the province. Major hydroelectric projects—such as the Bersimis and Manic-Outardes stations and the James Bay complex—have positioned Québec as a world leader in green and renewable energy production, allowing it to limit its GHG emissions from fossil fuels.

Clean energy is one of the foundations of the province's economy. With 97% of its electricity generated by water power, Québec is one of the world's largest producers of hydroelectricity. Electric power is also a foundation for Québec's industrial development, offering stable supplies for the extraction and transformation of a range of natural resources found in its territory. This is most notably the case for aluminium and iron, as well as the pulp and paper that Québec produces and exports in large quantities.

The development of this energy resource happens in Québec, primarily with Québec-based expertise, taking the interests of all the inhabitants of the region into account.

Hydroelectric development

In its Energy Policy, which will be made public in the fall of 2015, the government will specify its policy orientations for the development of the energy potential in the area covered by the Plan Nord.

One of the topics that may be covered by the policy is an integrated approach to the development of hydroelectric facilities, transportation infrastructures and specific mining activities as part of a responsible and sustainable process. All hydroelectric projects will respect Hydro-Québec's three fundamental criteria: profitability, environmental acceptability and a favourable reception from local populations. It will also be subject to proper consultation with the First Nations concerned and Inuit.

QUÉBEC ENERGY POLICY

Québec's energy situation, like that of North America and the world, has evolved in recent years and brought new issues to light:

- The reliability and security of affordable energy supplies.
- The contribution of energy resources to economic prosperity and regional development.
- Remote locations and high operating costs for large companies, such as mines, and energy supply difficulties for isolated communities.
- The reduction of GHG emissions and the minimization of harm to the natural environment caused by energy production and consumption.
- The acceptability of energy projects for the communities affected.
- Collaboration across Canada to reach shared objectives while respecting Québec's areas of jurisdiction and interests.

In response, the Government of Québec has initiated a process that will culminate in the release of an energy policy in the fall of 2015.

The future energy policy will set out the government's policy directions with regard to the intensity of, and conditions for, the development of energy resources in the area covered by the Plan Nord, as well as measures designed to respond to the major issue of a diversified and reliable energy supply for this vast area.

Other sources of energy

Although the North is best known for its large hydroelectric power stations, it also offers considerable potential for wind and biomass generation, which are both sources of clean, renewable energy.

The government intends to support the development of clean, innovative energy sources to supply isolated communities in the area covered by the Plan Nord. Many communities in the region are not connected to the Hydro-Québec grid, and depend on independent networks, mainly powered by thermal power stations operating on diesel.

The government count on a broadening of the energy supply to ensure the retention, development and economic diversification of enterprises in the North.

The transition to renewable or low carbon-emitting energy sources, which show good results, will help increase the profitability and competitiveness of enterprises. It will also aid in reaching the objectives that the government has set for the reduction of GHG emissions and the fight against climate change.

The potential of liquefied natural gas, wind energy and biomass generation creates an advantage for the regions that have access to them, especially if different energy sources can be combined.

There is an opportunity here to develop northern energy for use in the North.

INDEPENDENT NETWORKS

At the end of 2012, independent networks served 21 communities in the area covered by the Plan Nord. A total of 9,940 customers were located in 4 separate regions, of which 8,277 were homes or farms.

To meet the needs of these communities, the independent networks are powered by 2 hydroelectric stations and 20 thermal power stations. The operating costs for the thermal power stations are high given the price of fossil fuels and transportation costs. In addition, most of these stations will eventually require investments to ensure their longevity. In 2012, these independent networks:

- Had a total installed capacity of 93 megawatts (MW).
- Produced a total of 220 GWh of power.
- Had a production cost in Nunavik of between $0.66 and $1.32 per kWh.

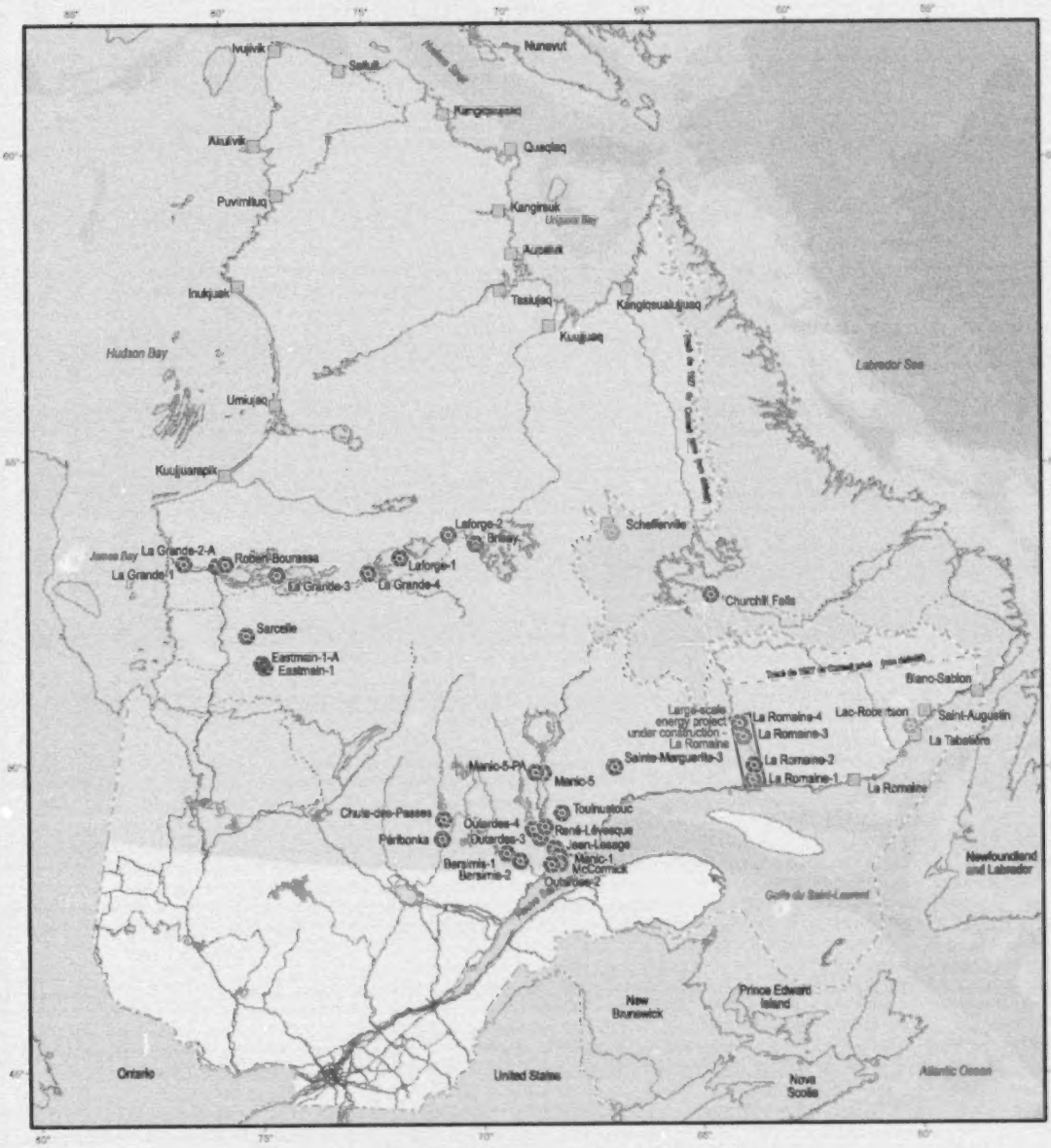
The thermal power stations used 31 million litres of fossil fuel, affecting Québec's performance in the fight against climate change.

Provide green energy to off-grid communities through innovation

Due the remoteness of northern communities and the costs that would be generated by connecting them to the hydroelectric network, it is important to find solutions adapted to northern realities that will allow for a gradual replacement of diesel generators by energies that are more profitable on both the economic and environmental levels. They must also be acceptable to local communities.

As an example, innovative projects will allow for the production of wind power by pairing it with other energy sources, such as biomass and natural gas, to ensure that these communities have a sufficient energy supply at all times.

Map 6 - Electricity generation in the area covered by the Plan Nord



Area covered by the Plan Nord

Independent power stations
- Hydroelectric
- Thermal (diesel)

Hydroelectric stations of 50 MW or more
- In operation
- Under construction

Transportation infrastructures
- Paved road
- Gravel road

Borders
- International border
- Interprovincial border
- Québec – Newfoundland and Labrador border (non-definitive)

Sources

Data	Organization	Year
Power stations	Hydro-Québec	2014
	MERN	2014
Spatial organization	MERN	2015
Transportation infrastructures	MERN	2014

Production
Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles
Direction générale de l'information géographique

Note: This document has no legal value.

© Gouvernement du Québec, 2015

0 200 km

OUJÉ-BOUGOUMOU: A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

- Designed and built at the beginning of the 1990s, the village of Oujé-Bougoumou respects the Cree philosophy that life must be in harmony with the environment, featuring innovative, high-performance architecture and a community heating plant.
- The designers turned to a local energy resource—the by-products of the Barrette-Chapais sawmill—and decided to build a central heating station powered by biofuels to heat and provide hot water to all the buildings in the community. On that day, Oujé-Bougoumou became the first community in North America to use a centralized heating system to supply an entire village and is the first community on the continent to use biomass as a fuel and hot water as a means of energy transfer.
- Today, Oujé-Bougoumou attracts visitors from every corner of the world and the community has received a number of prestigious prizes, including the United Nations Prize for Sustainable Communities. The collective heating system in Oujé-Bougoumou has allowed the community to meet several objectives, increasing its independence, saving money, protecting the environment and creating jobs.

Energy, a powerful lever for economic development

Québec offers investors green and renewable energy that is accessible over a vast territory via a reliable transmission and distribution network. Nearly 80% of Hydro-Québec's generating capacity is located in northern regions.

The development and transformation of natural resources are business sectors that are particularly energy-consuming. When a mine is forced to use generator power to produce its electricity, up to 30% of the operating costs may be related to energy use. Energy is necessary at all stages of the mining process, from drilling, blasting, excavation, crushing, ore and waste transportation to dehydration, concentration and granulation. The availability of competitively-priced energy is therefore a prime factor in the attraction of investors and the implementation of economically-viable projects.

Reducing costs by supplying renewable energy while reducing GHG emissions in extreme conditions is a major challenge that Québec is currently addressing. The Raglan Mine pilot project in Nunavik, which aims to use wind power beginning in the summer of 2015, is an example that such a goal can be reached.

With respect to mining and industrial development, Hydro-Québec will evaluate all extensions of its transmission network in order to supply new mining projects and isolated communities that are not currently connected.

ENERGY INNOVATION PILOT PROJECT AT RAGLAN MINE

The objective of this project is to install a wind turbine and to demonstrate the different types of wind power energy storage possible. It is a technology showcase that will be developed in an industrial and Arctic setting at the Raglan Mine, operated by the Glencore Group, in Nunavik. TUGLIG Energy, a company whose mission is to diversify energy sources in the Far North, has received $6.5 million in funding from the MERN as part of the 2013-2020 Action Plan on Climate Change to complete the project, whose total cost is estimated at $22.5 million.

The commissioning of the first 3 MW wind turbine was completed in the summer of 2014, with $3.5 million in financial assistance from the MERN. Since the facilities at Raglan Mine are not connected to the Hydro-Québec network, the energy produced by the first wind turbine will serve to reduce the amount of diesel used by the generators.

Access to natural gas

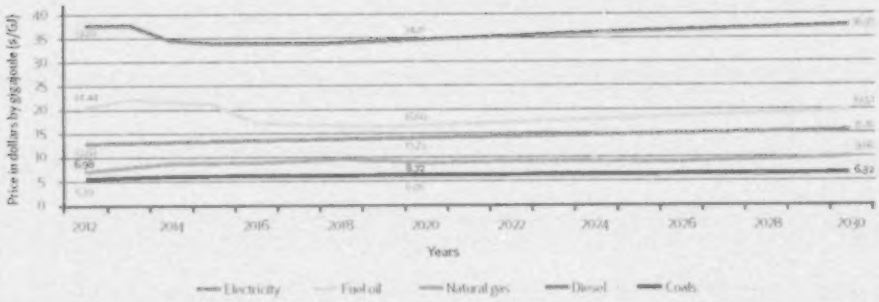
Since 2006, due to a large increase in production in the United States, the price of natural gas on the North American market has compared favourably to that of diesel, and to a lesser extent, fuel oil. According to current trends, this competitive natural gas price may remain stable until 2030 (Figure 2).

Natural gas could constitute an economical energy choice for high energy-consuming enterprises, creating an advantage for the attraction of new investments, specifically in the mining sector in the area covered by the Plan Nord. Access to natural gas is also an advantage for certain remote communities that are not connected to the gas distribution network.

Despite its clear advantages, natural gas is not currently available in the Côte-Nord and Nord-du-Québec regions because demand is not high enough to justify the cost of extending the Gaz Métro supply network from Saguenay.

The long distances separating potential natural gas consumers in the area covered by the Plan Nord from the current distribution network by gas pipeline has led the government to initiate a process that will accelerate the natural gas supply to the Côte-Nord and Nord-du-Québec regions and to ensure rapid distribution by 2016.

Figure 2 - Price of natural gas, fuel oil, diesel, coal and electricity in the industrial sector from 2015 to 2013 in $/GJ (2012 $)



Source: KPMG-SECOR: Estimation of needs for the period 2015-2030 for natural gas in Québec and potential regional supply, September 2014, p. 82.

Note: The major decrease in oil prices in recent months, from $105 per barrel in July to $55 per barrel in December 2014, may significantly affect these scenarios if prices remain low.

Liquefied natural gas (LNG) is an interesting avenue to explore to help meet the current demand since it can be transported by truck or ship. This is also why the Government of Québec recently invested $50 million in the project to expand the Gaz Métro LNG plant in Montreal, the only liquefaction infrastructures in Canada. A portion of this new production will available for distribution beginning in June 2016 to industrial clients located in the Nord-du-Québec and Côte-Nord regions.

PARTNERSHIP WITH GAZ MÉTRO

On September 20, 2014, the Québec government, through Investissement Québec, announced that it was investing $50 million in the Gaz Métro subsidiary responsible for the marketing of liquefied natural gas.

The project, with an estimated cost of $118 million, will help meet the increasing demand for LNG by tripling the production capacity at the Gaz Métro plant. Starting in the summer of 2016, clients will be able to use the LNG supply.

The government remains aware of the need to find a more reliable solution at a better price for enterprises located in the area covered by the Plan Nord. To this end, discussions have taken place with groups of enterprises, concerned bodies and potential clients to evaluate the feasibility of projects that will provide a concrete and viable solution as quickly as possible.

The Stornoway Diamond Corporation, developing the Renard diamond project located 400 km to the north of Chibougamau, will be the first mining company supplied with LNG.

THE RENARD PROJECT: A FORERUNNER IN THE USE OF LNG IN THE NORTH

Given that the cost of connecting to the electricity grid proved too high for the estimated lifespan of its mine, Stornoway Diamond opted to set up an LNG-powered plant as its main source of energy rather than diesel generators.

This solution was chosen despite the fact that the capital costs were slightly higher than for diesel generation. It offered numerous advantages, including:

- An 8 to 10 million dollar reduction in annual operating costs for the 11-year period of the mine's initial lifespan.
- An estimated 41% reduction in GHG emissions.
- A safer mode of transportation.
- A stable supply of LNG using a pre-existing commercial distribution network in Québec.

LNG is an attractive option for enterprises, offering standard commercial technology, a long-term supply outlook, a smaller environmental footprint and immediate financial advantages for the project, given the significant reduction in operating costs. This option was made possible thanks to an all-season road that allows for regular LNG deliveries.

Ensure that stable supplies of fossil fuels are available in municipalities on the Moyenne and Basse-Côte-Nord until access to renewable energy is possible

The government will continue to ensure the supply to communities in the Moyenne and Basse-Côte-Nord regions between the municipalities of Natashquan and Blanc-Sablon using the trust[11] established for this purpose on December 15, 1994.[12]

The MERN contributed nearly $8.4 million to the trust between 2003 and 2015 to subsidize activities for the supply of petroleum products to the Basse-Côte-Nord. This allowed the price of petroleum products to remain at affordable levels for households and enterprises.

2015-2020 PRIORITY ACTIONS IN THE ENERGY SECTOR

- Draft the 2016-2025 Québec Energy Policy in cooperation with the stakeholders concerned.
- Ensure a competitively-priced power supply for mine development.
- Ensure a competitively-priced natural gas supply to improve mine profitability, reduce GHG emissions and attract new investment and supply liquefied natural gas to the North.
- Support the projects of off-grid communities and enterprises to replace fossil fuels by renewable energy sources in order to generate power.
- Secure the power supply by extending the power transmission grid where possible and cost-effective.
- Ensure a stable supply of fossil fuels for municipalities on the Moyenne and Basse-Côte-Nord.

11 Fiducie pour l'approvisionnement en hydrocarbures des municipalités de la Moyenne-Côte-Nord et de la Basse-Côte-Nord.

12 The initial assets of the trust consisted of seven petrol stations acquired from Ultramar Canada Inc. (now Valero Energy) and located in Natashquan, La Romaine, Harrington Harbour, Tête-à-la-Baleine, La Tabatière, Saint-Augustin and Blanc-Sablon. The Natashquan site was closed in 2007 and dismantled in 2008 following the extension of Route 138 to Natashquan.

3.2.4 Increase the socio-economic benefits of wildlife activities while ensuring the long-term viability of the resource

The wildlife resources located in the area covered by the Plan Nord are a fundamental element of Québec's biodiversity (Map 7). They are especially important in the culture, traditions and diet of the aboriginal nations, whose rights are at the heart of the northern agreements signed with the Crees, Inuit and Naskapis in 1975 and 1978. Wildlife resources are important for sports activities such as hunting, fishing and trapping, in addition to wildlife observation. Their importance is recognized outside Québec since they attract an international clientele.

These activities generate significant economic benefits for local and aboriginal communities, and for Québec as a whole. In 2012, Québec residents dedicated more than 1,800,000 days to hunting, fishing and trapping activities and spent nearly $182 million in the area covered by the Plan Nord, which helped to maintain approximately 1,400 jobs in the sector.

WILDLIFE RESOURCES AND RELATED ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA COVERED BY THE PLAN NORD

Wildlife resources

- Birds: 237 species
- Fur-bearing animals: 20 species
- Fish (for sport fishing): 11 species, including lake trout, Atlantic salmon and anadromous Arctic char
- Small game: 7 species, including American hare and rock ptarmigan
- Big game: 6 species, including moose and caribou

Related activities in 2014

- Outfitters: 190, including 53 with exclusive operating rights
- Controlled harvesting zones: 2 for Atlantic salmon and 10 for hunting and fishing
- Wildlife reserves: 4 offering activities related to the harvesting of wildlife
- Communal wildlife areas: 1 (northern sector of the Lac Saint-Jean communal wildlife area)
- Adventure excursions and activities not related to the harvesting of wildlife

However, northern wildlife resources are highly vulnerable to harvesting and habitat disturbance. As a result, development of the area and its resources must be adequately supervised to ensure the integrity and viability of the wildlife population. Habitat protection and all issues connected with wildlife conservation must be considered carefully. For example, the migrating caribou herds in northern Québec, which have been in decline in recent years, are a matter of concern that must be taken into account.

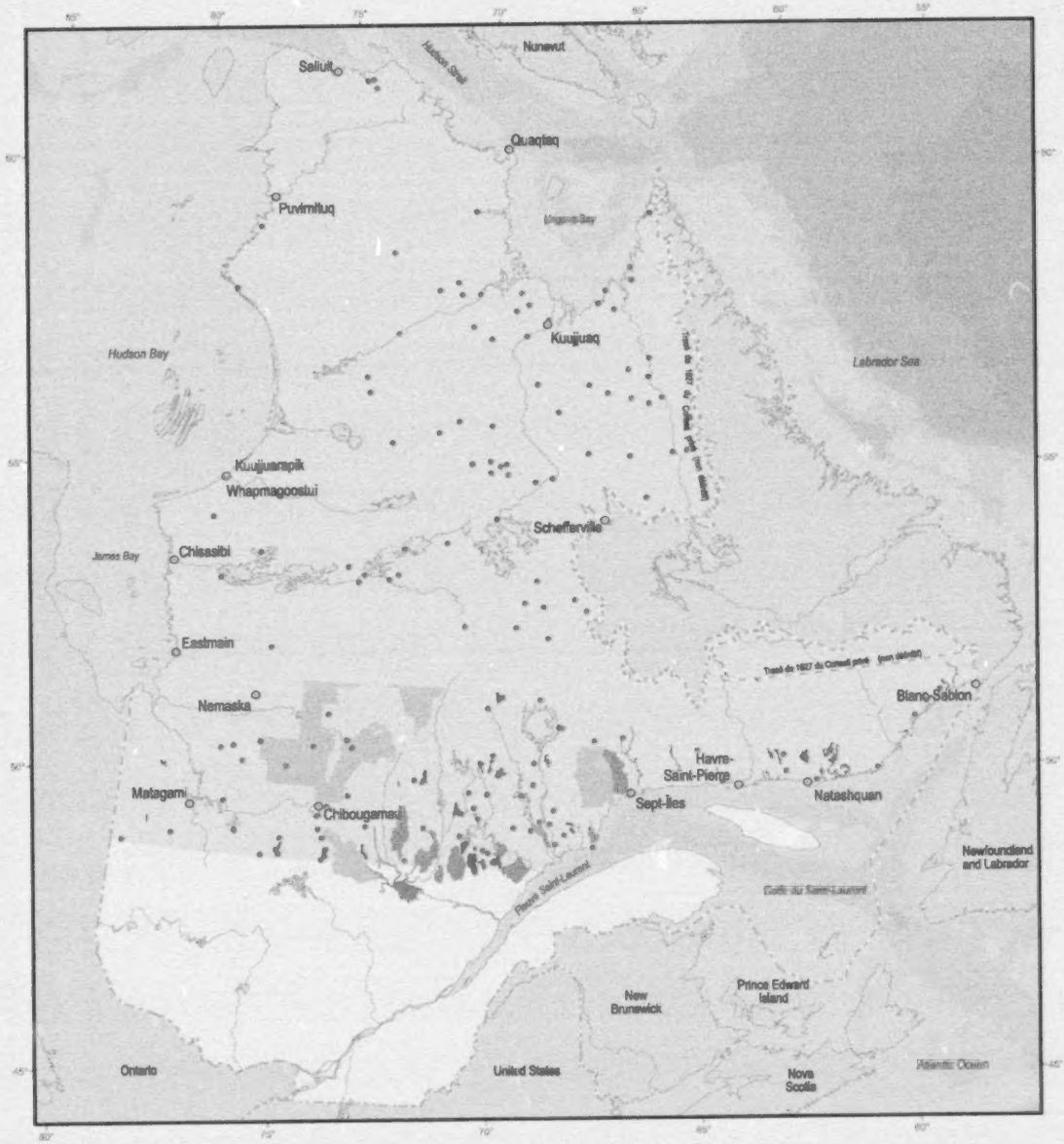
As a result, the government intends to increase its efforts, through the MFFP, in order to:

- Increase knowledge about wildlife resources in the area covered by the Plan Nord by providing an updated overview of their distribution, conservation needs, and the potential for development of different species. In this regard, the government plans to establish research partnerships that will utilize traditional aboriginal knowledge.
- Consolidate and diversify the offer of services and activities adapted to the North. Increased access to the region and new opportunities for the development of wildlife resources will make tangible contributions to the socioeconomic benefits expected on the local scale and for the whole of Québec.
- Promote the active participation of local and aboriginal communities in the conservation and development of wildlife resources. This will encourage the establishment of regional initiatives and a fair sharing of the socioeconomic benefits for communities and regions in northern Québec.

2015-2020 PRIORITY ACTIONS IN THE WILDLIFE SECTOR

- Implement a five-year financial assistance program to support knowledge acquisition, the development and enhancement of wildlife resources, and the involvement of local and aboriginal communities.
- Identify wildlife potential and wildlife issues through applied research projects.
- Support the development and implementation of training programs in the field of wildlife protection tailored to the needs of aboriginal communities.

Map 7 - Wildlife regions



Area covered by the Plan Nord

Wildlife areas

- Outfitter without exclusive rights
- Communal wildlife area
- Outfitter with exclusive rights
- Wildlife reserve
- Controlled harvesting zone (ZEC)

Borders

- International border
- Interprovincial border
- Québec – Newfoundland and Labrador border (non-definitive)

Sources

Data	Organization	Year
Spatial organization	MERN	2014
Wildlife areas	MFFP	2014

Production

Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles
Direction générale de l'information géographique

Note: This document has no legal value.

© Gouvernement du Québec, 2015

0 200 km

3.2.5 Promote tourism development by highlighting the area's distinctive character

The *Québec Tourism Strategy North of the 49th parallel*, released in November 2011 as part of the Plan Nord, aimed to make northern Québec a world-class destination providing an authentic, exceptional and safe tourism experience that aligned the coexistence of northern peoples and respect for nature in a perspective of entrepreneurial development and collective wealth.[13]

The Strategy was drawn up in close collaboration with partners in the regions concerned and covered a ten-year period. It is expected to generate a total investment of $70 million in Québec's northern regions by governments and the private sector. These investments, and the related structural efforts, should increase annual expenditure by tourists in the North from $82 million to $140 million by 2021.

Until now, the financial assistance program for tourism north of the 49th parallel has provided support for 48 projects with a total estimated cost of over $70 million. In addition, the government has announced an envelope of $3.16 million for 2014-2015 to support the implementation of the strategy for the hiring of staff by regional tourism associations in the Côte-Nord and Eeyou Itschee Baie-James regions, as well as by the Kativik Regional Government.

Through the Ministère du Tourisme (MTOUR), the government will continue to promote the expansion of aboriginal and cultural tourism, ecotourism, and adventure tourism, while highlighting the unique character of the areas covered by the Plan Nord, including their natural, cultural and regional traits. The efforts will focus on improving infrastructures for lodging, outfitting operations and regional tourist homes, as well as the establishment of distinctive tourist attractions and products. Human resource training and management, as well as the promotion and marketing of the destination, will also be included in the government's priority actions in partnership with local and regional tourism actors.

A niche of excellence in Nordic tourism has also been created for the Nord-du-Québec region. It focuses on two distinct sectors, Nunavik and Eeyou Itschee Baie-James, regions that are known for their unique natural attractions and exceptional cultural heritage. These sectors focus on a niche of tourism addressing small groups of individuals seeking original and typical experiences that respect local cultures and the environment.

13 Québec. Ministère du Tourisme. *Québec Tourism Strategy North of the 49th Parallel — Cultures and Wilderness to Discover*. Québec, 2011. [Online][collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/bs2098924].

2015-2020 PRIORITY ACTIONS IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

- Support the development of structural tourism projects north of the 49th parallel.
- Help tourism enterprise managers upgrade their skills and those of their workers.
- Design marketing tools compatible with Québec's brand image.
- Gather strategic knowledge about Nordic tourism.
- Promote the establishment of multi-purpose regional tourist centres.
- Diversify the activities of outfitting operations in the North.

SÉPAQ A LEVER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE NORTH

The Société des établissements et de plein air du Québec (SÉPAQ) is known for its experience in management and expertise in:

- Managing protected areas (national parks) and wildlife areas.
- Developing and marketing nature tourism products and services, such as outdoor activities, hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, and related services such as various forms of outdoor lodging experiences. SÉPAQ possesses a large distribution network and a multitude of marketing and promotional tools.
- In partnership with Aboriginals and outfitters—the legal status of SÉPAQ allows it to enter into business partnerships and management partnerships, specifically with aboriginal communities and outfitters. It has therefore developed a model for business partnerships in the Réserve faunique de La Vérendrye with two aboriginal communities living in the territory, which it could easily adapt to the regions covered under the Plan Nord. This model has allowed for the successful launching of tourism products while sharing investments and profits with a view to transferring knowledge to the communities (joint investments with a sharing of risk and profits; development and marketing by SÉPAQ, but with personnel from the communities). In this same wildlife reserve, agreements also exist with outfitters located in the territory to allow for greater development of this vast area.
- Through regional collaboration—SÉPAQ also bases its actions on a unique collaborative model that allows for the integration of regional concerns in the development of the areas under its management.

Given its expertise, SÉPAQ is ideally placed, as part of the Plan Nord, to collaborate actively with tourism partners in the North, in order to create wealth from a structured development of nature tourism in the northern regions.

3.2.6 Design and implement a sustainable northern bio-food model based on potential in the area

The economy and jobs in several coastal communities in the North have, for many years, been based on the exploitation of a small number of marine species such as cod and other bottomfish, the stocks of which are in decline. These communities now face the challenge of finding outlets for other less intensively exploited marine species, adopting more eco-responsible fishing methods, and using their infrastructures for bio-food production.

The North is already known for the production of certain sea products such as northern shrimp and snow crab. Wild mushrooms and other non-timber forest products are also harvested for many different commercial uses, such as food additives, essential oils and ornamental products. Small northern berries such as blueberries, northern cranberries and cloudberries, some of which are rich in health-promoting substances, are also typical of bio-food production in northern regions. Enterprises are currently being developed in the North to process and market these products in their region of origin and in national or international niche markets.

The high cost of food in the North resulting from transportation costs, along with certain deficiencies in quality, diversity, wholesomeness and nutritional value, has repercussions on the health and life expectancy of northern populations. This points to the need to develop a locally-based food production, processing and distribution industry.

Northern Québec has one of the largest reserves of arable land in North America, totalling 1.5 million hectares, while the total amount of land currently being cultivated in Québec covers 2 million hectares. In addition, the geographic isolation and Nordic climate grant it certain advantages—fewer insects and other pests, less disease—for biological production and the production of high quality plant seeds that are indispensable to agriculture in the South.

To the extent that renewable energy is available (wind or solar power, or energy generated from biomass) at a reasonable price for isolated villages and communities, the installation of greenhouses to produce fresh food in the region could prove to be advantageous to promote a healthy diet and allow for the creation of local jobs.

The government intends to develop this potential by supporting the development of a sustainable agricultural model by the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation (MAPAQ). Efforts will focus on the development of infrastructures for conditioning and processing, support for local food production initiatives and the development of distinct niche products. This will compensate for high transportations costs in northern regions and support the economic growth of northern communities and processing plants installed in the area covered by the Plan Nord.

2015-2020 PRIORITY ACTIONS IN THE BIO-FOOD SECTOR

- Provide support for isolated local and aboriginal communities that invest in order to increase local food production, reduce their level of dependency and lower food costs. For example, support initiatives to grow crops under cover (greenhouses, polytunnels, etc.).
- Support the development of the northern berry sector and non-timber forest products sector.
- Provide local and aboriginal communities with the tools they need to implement and supervise the application of wholesome food initiatives at all levels (production, processing, restaurant services and retail sales).

Inuu youth.
Photocredit: Marc Tremblay

DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING OF LOCAL AND ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

4.1 Objectives for 2035

The government has placed the local and aboriginal communities in the area covered by the Plan Nord at the heart of its concerns. In addition to creating the conditions needed for the development of the area's resources, it is essential to focus on the living conditions of the people living in the area and to respond to their specific needs.

Each community has its own cultural, geographical and economic features, but the communities also share a number of characteristics, such as their remote location in a vast and sparsely populated area. They will not all be affected in the same way by development in the North, and it is important to provide the support they need to meet the changes they face.

The development of the North must benefit the northern population as a whole, and not only the communities that host development projects. Support must be provided for communities placed under pressure by the establishment of large-scale economic projects in their vicinity.

Mining or other projects in remote locations necessarily bring a large number of workers to the area, and special attention must be paid to the services made available. Workers must be offered an attractive lifestyle that encourages them to settle in the area.

To channel the dynamism of local and aboriginal populations and ensure that they benefit as much as possible from the development of the North's economic potential, the Plan Nord targets the following seven objectives:

- Broaden the reflection on the occupation of the northern territory.
- Help local and aboriginal communities plan and structure their development.
- Promote labour force training and retention in the North.
- Increase graduation rates and educational attainment in northern communities.
- Provide a more adequate response to the social needs of local populations.
- Ensure the cultural development of northern communities and highlight the cultural heritage of local communities and aboriginal nations.
- Consolidate the services provided for families and seniors living in local and aboriginal communities by supporting innovative, collaborative solutions.

To meet these objectives, it will be necessary to promote the inherent qualities of the local populations, which are characterized by their youth, their dynamic attitude and their wish to develop the area in a sustainable way. This demographic profile is especially pronounced in aboriginal communities, where roughly 60% of the population is under the age of 35. Local and aboriginal communities must be given the tools they need to develop and ensure the ongoing vitality of their community while reaping some of the economic benefits offered by the Plan Nord.

4.2 Priority actions for 2015-2020

The government has identified a set of priority actions that it intends to implement over the 2015-2020 period, with the objective of ensuring that local and aboriginal communities take advantage of the benefits generated by northern development. The actions are also designed to promote the training of specialized workers to meet the needs created by development projects. Two related goals are student retention and academic success.

The government will give priority to actions that improve health and social services, justice and housing. Last it will promote cultural development agreements and will work to ensure security in the area covered by the Plan Nord.

4.2.1 Ensure that the development of the North generates concrete benefits for local and aboriginal communities

Development projects linked to the Plan Nord offer several ways for local and aboriginal communities to improve their quality of life, consolidate their sense of belonging and pride, and keep young people in the community. At the same time, they present significant challenges, for example to ensure that local residents have access to the jobs generated by the projects and are able to exercise suitable control over structural effects on the social fabric, culture, land use and public infrastructures.

The arrival of new enterprises and new residents, including families, can also trigger industrial, commercial and residential development and create an additional need for municipal infrastructures and services of all kinds, in particular for children and seniors.

To meet these challenges, it is important to develop planning tools adapted to the realities of the North. It is also necessary to ensure that local and aboriginal communities have the resources they need to manage the development of their territory effectively and share in the benefits of development.

The government will continue to contribute directly, in compliance with existing agreements, to the infrastructure projects made necessary by development in the North, thanks to the financial assistance program establishment for that purpose in 2013. The program is administered by the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Occupation du territoire (MAMOT) and has a budget of $200 million. It will finance the replacement, repair, upgrading and development of municipal drinking water and sewage infrastructures, as well as local roads. It will also apply to infrastructures with urban or regional impacts. The program to transfer public land, free of charge, to northern municipalities, established by the MERN, will help municipalities develop their urban sector. In addition, it will allow them to complete work on infrastructures to deal with major urban growth following the implementation of large-scale projects under the Plan Nord.

The government will also continue work to document the impact of the fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) system, which brings workers from the South to stay for short, repeated periods in the North. The work will help shed light on the impacts of the system and, if necessary, mitigate its effects by encouraging workers and their families to settle in the local communities concerned.

Four Québec government departments, the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS), the MEIE, the MDDELCC and the MERN, will encourage enterprises to become more socially responsible. They will, in particular, promote corporate social responsibility and support enterprises that take account of economic, social and environmental issues in their business decisions and activities in the North, and also in their interactions with stakeholders.

The promoters of large-scale development projects will receive support in defining their commitments to ensure the development and wellbeing of the host communities for their projects.

The government will focus on social involvement to ensure that enterprises contribute to sustainable development, including human health and social wellbeing, by encouraging them to:

- Offer an attractive working environment to facilitate worker integration and retention.
- Maintain or, in some cases, improve the quality of life in local communities by completing structural projects with other community partners.
- Report publicly on their achievements as part of their ongoing relationship with local communities, the harmonious integration of their projects, the preservation of a high-quality living environment, the signing of local supply contracts, and the provision of services and jobs.

AGREEMENT ON THE FINANCING OF MEASURES TO REDUCE THE COST OF LIVING IN **NUNAVIK**

The cost of living in Nunavik has been a constant concern for over 20 years. Because of a series of factors, including remoteness, the lack of roads and a harsh climate, goods and services in Nunavik cost considerably more than elsewhere in Québec. Fuel, food and transportation services are all affected.

The government is concerned about the consequences of the high cost of living on families in Nunavik. For this reason, between now and 2016-2017 it intends to continue the financial assistance offered to households in Nunavik, especially the least privileged, and to establish measures tailored to local realities.

The government also takes part in a study conducted jointly by the Kativik Regional Government and Makivik Corporation concerning consumption patterns in Nunavik, in order to establish the foundation for a sustainable solution to the problem.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNITY AND MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

- Document fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) issues for enterprises, workers and communities, especially in the Côte-Nord region.
- Continue to offer support for communities in their efforts to adapt to change, and to accommodate and benefit from development.
- Continue the implementation of Component 4 of the Québec-municipalities infrastructure program (Programme d'infrastructures Québec-Municipalités, or PIQM), which enables municipalities to implement infrastructure projects to meet priority development needs.
- Support social involvement by enterprises.

4.2.2 Train more specialized workers to meet the needs of development projects in the area covered by the Plan Nord

The implementation of the Plan Nord constitutes an unprecedented challenge for Québec because of the need to develop, attract, integrate and retain workers. General, technical and vocational education is, from this point of view, an essential component in the economic development of northern Québec. The people inhabiting the area will be encouraged to acquire and develop the skills needed to maximize their prospects in the labour market.

The technical and vocational education currently available and accessible to the local population is, however, limited and not necessarily adapted to local labour force needs. For this reason, many young people are forced to leave their home communities to study in urban centres in the South. For some of them, especially if they are aboriginal, this situation considerably reduces their access to education and training.

In addition, despite the effort made to provide education and vocational training in the area covered by the Plan Nord, the need for specialized workers is so great that it cannot be met just by graduates from the training centres in the area. This highlights the importance of setting up attractive technical and vocational training programs adapted to the needs of the North.

To promote economic growth in the communities concerned and improve living conditions, a special effort will be made to provide training and jobs for workers, including Aboriginals, in trades connected with land development and protection, natural resources, energy, wildlife, construction and transportation. Skills development and jobs are significant issues for these communities, most of which have large numbers of young people about to reach working age.

In addition, the members of aboriginal communities have a special connection to the land, making them ideal candidates for jobs connected with the projects and activities under way in the area. Specific measures must be implemented to achieve the best possible match between current and future labour market needs and the qualification of workers in aboriginal communities.

If no specific strategy is implemented, there is a risk that places in new, attractive and qualifying training programs will be filled mainly by men. This could compromise the entry of women into several high value-added trades. Some aboriginal women, in particular, do not have the educational background needed to fill certain positions that will be created by the implementation of the Plan Nord.

The concentration of men, or women, in certain traditional occupations is particularly evident in the North, given that the economy is mainly based on natural resource extraction and construction activities.

For example, women remain under-represented in the mining industry. Across Québec, they hold barely 16% of the jobs in the sector, despite forming 48% of the workforce.[14] Similarly, they account for just over 1% of the total workforce of around 160,000 in Québec's construction industry.[15]

14 2013 Report – Mining Industry Human Resources Council.

15 Commission de la construction du Québec – *Les femmes dans la construction, portrait statistique 2013*, august 2014, 15p.

The government will therefore take all the necessary steps to train as many specialized workers as possible to meet the needs of development projects in the area covered by the Plan Nord. It will also facilitate the training, integration and retention of women and aboriginal workers in various high value-added jobs, acting on its commitments in the area of equal access to employment.

To complement the local workforce, the government will encourage vocational training centres in other regions of Québec to consider workforce needs in the area covered by the Plan Nord. A new, $10 million allocation has already been included for this purpose in the 2014-2015 budget. This will help vocational training centres in various regions of Québec prepare more specialized workers to meet the needs of enterprises in northern Québec.

As part of its responsibilities relating to the production and distribution of labour market information, the MTESS will give priority to creating a profile of the workforce in the area covered by the Plan Nord. To meet the challenge of recruiting and training workers, information must be gathered and disseminated to give economic and social players, as well as workers, a more accurate and up-to-date view of the characteristics of the labour market in the North.

ACTIONS TO SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT ON THE NORTH SHORE

Despite the high level of economic activity in the mining and construction sectors on the Côte-Nord, employment is not increasing and the level of employment even dropped in 2013. In addition, because of the shortage of workers in some sectors, the mining industry has come to rely in part on a fly-in, fly-out workforce. For this reason, the government set up a regional discussion table on the workforce in the industrial and construction sectors, the Table régionale Côte-Nord sur la main-d'œuvre dans les secteurs industriels et de la construction. In May 2014, the Table submitted a report with 11 recommendations. An interdepartmental committee was then created to implement the recommendations and identify 17 concrete actions to support employment in the Côte-Nord region.

The government will implement the 17 actions proposed by the interdepartmental committee, based on the recommendations made by the Table. The application of the measures will also benefit all local and aboriginal communities in the area covered by the Plan Nord. Special attention will be paid to implementing all the measures, and the following government departments and bodies will be involved: the Commission de la construction du Québec (CCQ), MAMOT, MEESR, MTESS, Emploi-Québec, MERN and the Société du Plan Nord.

For more details on the 17 measures, see Appendix 3.

The government's overall vision for workforce training will be implemented jointly by the MTESS and the Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche (MEESR), in close collaboration with education and training institutions, the CCQ, enterprises, local and aboriginal communities, the regional councils of labour market partners and the secondary/college/university discussion tables. The Ministère de la Famille (MFA), the Secrétariat à la condition féminine (SCF) and the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones (SAA) will also be involved in the process.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF LABOUR FORCE DEVELOPMENT

Attract, recruit and retain workers using:

- The *Online Placement* website and its Plan Nord component.
- Job fairs in the regions in the area covered by the Plan Nord, in aboriginal communities, and in other regions of Québec.
- Access to an information service associated with the Plan Nord to inform and guide job seekers, offered throughout Québec at local employment centres and Emploi-Québec regional offices.

Promote regional hiring in the construction sector:

- By revising the placement regions for the construction sector in the Nord-du-Québec region.

Produce and distribute information on the labour market by:

- Promoting the Labour Market Information (LMI) website.
- Creating and publicizing a profile of the workforce in the area covered by the Plan Nord.
- Producing and disseminating information on job prospects and the professions in demand in the North.
- Implementing a joint approach with the aboriginal organizations responsible for creating a profile of the aboriginal workforce.

Support worker training by:

- Using information on the labour market to improve the match between industry needs and worker skills.
- Introducing employment assistance measures, including a training measure for the area covered by the Plan Nord and for workers in the South who wish to work in the North.

Strengthen the links with aboriginal communities by:

- Maintaining the network of six aboriginal liaison officers introduced in 2013 by Emploi-Québec and reviewing their tasks in light of the government policy directions on services for Aboriginals.

Encourage full participation by women in the workforce by:

- Creating an equal access program for women in the construction industry.
- Signing agreements or launching projects for equal access, especially in aboriginal communities, and promoting full participation by women in all spheres of northern development.
- Offering services for families and children in northern communities that are adapted to their needs, particularly high-quality, accessible daycare services.

Continue to create reduced-contribution daycare places north of the 49th parallel.

4.2.3 Promote student retention and academic success, and ensure that as many young people and adults as possible obtain basic qualifications

Student retention is a crucial element in the development of northern Québec. The prospect of obtaining a good job should, in itself, be a powerful incentive for students in the area covered by the Plan Nord to continue their education. However, the dropout rate for young First Nations and Inuit people is on average three times higher than the rate for Québec as a whole. The causes are numerous and interrelated, and can be traced back to learning difficulties of various kinds, and to schools, families and living environments.

The Cree School Board, Kativik School Board and Naskapi School, whose main objectives include student retention and academic success, also face other problems:

- The need for infrastructures to dispense services to increasing numbers of students.
- A high turnover rate among teaching and professional staff.
- Mastery of French or English by students whose mother tongue is an aboriginal language.

It is recognized that the teacher/student relationship is one of the factors that can encourage young people to persevere and succeed. To improve this relationship, it is essential to help teachers adapt their methods, improve job mobility and give them access to suitable housing, all of which will make it easier to retain teachers in the North. It is important to do everything possible to nurture a feeling of belonging to the community.

It is also essential take action early in the elementary and secondary education of students who are at risk of dropping out, to encourage them to stay in school and to reduce the number of potential dropouts.

In addition, for women, it is important to ensure full participation in the labour market. A shortage of daycare spaces may, in some cases, increase the dropout rate for women or result in their exclusion from the labour market.

It is extremely important to offer programs and services that are adapted to the adult population in the area, in particular in aboriginal communities covered by existing agreements, where over 80% of students leave school with no qualifications, compared to the Québec-wide rate of 17%.[16] The programs and services must be designed to help students, once they become adults, to upgrade their skills, expertise and qualifications and increase their level of education.

A student's ability to enrol in college and university programs depends on the duration and quality of his or her elementary and secondary education. It is important to consider the general educational level within families and the value they place on education. An interest in college and university studies is kindled well before the point at which a student actually enrols.

Students must be encouraged to stay in school, for example by offering them a range of training programs adapted to the needs and interests existing in each region, community or city. The focus needs to be on a decentralized approach.

16 *Education Statistics Bulletin*, no. 42, "L'éducation des populations scolaires dans les communautés autochtones du Québec en 2010".

Numerous structures and services are currently available in the area. The first step will be to assess the current situation and ensure that their operations and contributions are optimized, by promoting joint action, synergy and the use of existing resources by the players in the field. This will ensure a better match between the needs of students and the programs offered.

Through the MEESR, the government will give priority to improving academic success and student retention rates, and to ensuring that as many people as possible obtain a basic qualification.

Considering the high rate of students leaving schools run by the Cree School Board (CSB) and Kativik School Board (KSB) without a diploma, and the number of aboriginal students who return to school as adults, the MEESR is working actively with aboriginal educational organizations to improve access to general adult education and vocational training for aboriginal students. The MEESR notes that adult education and vocational training provide a springboard for worker qualification, which constitutes a major issue for aboriginal communities and for Québec as a whole.

To respond more effectively to the needs of aboriginal adults returning to school, the CSB and KSB have, in particular, worked with the MEESR to increase the range of general adult education and vocational training services provided. The general adult education services provided by the CSB in most Cree communities helped over 460 adults resume their education in 2013-2014. In the area of vocational training, the CSB helped over 124 students obtain a diploma of vocational studies in 2013-2014. The KSB is currently providing general adult education in six villages, and over 220 adult Inuit students received general adult education services in 2013-2014.

The focus will be then on improving the educational actions applied in the case of youth students, including students in aboriginal communities. The federal government will be involved, since funding for education in the Innu communities in the area covered by the Plan Nord is under federal jurisdiction. The Québec government will also improve the services it provides in the area covered by the Plan Nord. An allocation of $90 million has been included in the 2014-2015 budget to finance structural projects implemented by the Cree School Board, Kativik School Board and Naskapi School.

In addition to this amount, a series of existing structural measures will improve vocational training for northern populations through:

- The construction of a multi-purpose training centre in Sept-Îles.
- The reconstruction of the multi-purpose training centre in Chibougamau.
- The purchasing and fitting out of a modular, mobile metallurgy workshop/school in Chibougamau.
- The completion of a feasibility study for a mining school specializing in surface deposits.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

General adult education, technical and vocational education

- Analyze the possibility of grouping together the vocational education programs offered by various school boards to maximize the ability to train qualified workers for the mining sector or major hydroelectric projects. This project also involves the creation of a fund to allow teachers in programs relating to the mining sector to upgrade their skills.
- Increase the support services provided to aboriginal students in general adult education and vocational education, especially reception, referral, counselling and support services and complementary educational services.

College and university programs

- Launch a process, with other players in the area including the secondary/college/university discussion tables, government partners, aboriginal and non-aboriginal coordination organizations and enterprises, to identify current and foreseeable needs in the field of higher education.
- Help establish regional mechanisms for coordination and cooperation with all higher education players in the area covered by the Plan Nord to ensure an effective response to the needs expressed.
- Provide support for colleges and universities for the design and implementation of training programs and infrastructures.

Recreation and sports services

- Improve existing action plans in the field of recreation and sport.

4.2.4 Support ongoing efforts to provide improved health and social services, justice and housing

Large-scale projects in a northern environment can have both positive and negative impacts on various factors influencing the health of the population. These impacts can be seen in the physical and mental health of individuals, their lifestyles or their socio-economic characteristics. They may also influence workers' families, the dynamics and infrastructures of the communities in the vicinity of the projects, the organization of health and education services, and environment quality. In addition, because of the historic and social heterogeneity of the North and the characteristics of each project, the nature and intensity of the impacts may vary from one project, or one community, to another.

It is essential to manage the impacts jointly, considering that the health of the population in northern Québec is generally more at risk than elsewhere in Québec, a situation that also has repercussions for the justice system.

Healthcare, social services, housing and the justice system are all fundamental elements that must be addressed in order to improve the quality of life and ensure the wellbeing of the northern population. The assessments conducted as part of the process leading up to the Plan Nord in 2011 resulted in a detailed description of the problems and issues connected with the availability of services in the area covered by the Plan Nord.

There are clear differences between northern communities, whether local or aboriginal, in terms of their social vulnerability and their ability to act and respond. Not all of these communities have strategies for social development, poverty reduction or revitalization.

Other factors have social and psychological repercussions on families, especially precarious socio-economic conditions, the high cost of living, food insecurity, low educational levels, the lack of stable employment and the difficulty of access to family housing.

The various facets of these social realities have an impact on northern communities, which for several years have had to deal with an increase in crime. Most criminal offences involve family violence, in turn linked to drug or alcohol consumption.

It is recognized by all involved in these communities that addiction problems are inter-related. They may act as predisposing or aggravating factors, or appear as the consequence of the high-risk behaviour patterns and social problems observed in the communities.

These problems require constant intervention from the police and justice system and from health and social service workers, even though human and other resources are in limited supply in the North.

To deal with the unacceptable effects of all these factors on the wellbeing of individuals, government and community players must work together. They must mobilize to find innovative approaches adapted to the needs of local and aboriginal communities.

The extent of the problems and the pace of change within certain communities, including aboriginal communities, exceeds the local ability to act. To implement sustainable solutions that are culturally acceptable for local and aboriginal communities, all players must act together. This includes enterprises.

This overview highlights the importance for the government and other stakeholders, of playing a proactive, vigilant and supportive role in development projects under the Plan Nord to monitor the potential effects of the projects on the health of the local population and the adaptation of services to northern realities.

STATUS OF WOMEN

Research has shown that northern development may accentuate gender inequality between women and men and social inequality between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. This could amplify social problems such as violence, bullying, sexual assault, prostitution, drug addiction, alcoholism, poverty and racism, and also affect access to housing and daycare services. The accelerated pace of development in the North could, therefore, have a significant impact on living conditions, especially for women.

Aboriginal women may, in addition, be directly affected by the negative impacts of development. For example, women may be subjected to sexual harassment in the workplace and in communities close to major construction and development sites following the influx of large numbers of non-resident workers.

The government will take the necessary steps to ensure that the potential consequences of northern development are taken into consideration and that suitable measures are implemented to mitigate their effects or improve their outcome. This is made even more important by the fact that health indicators have revealed existing vulnerabilities. In this field, the government intends to obtain a more detailed picture of the current health of the northern populations and to monitor the situation in order to assess the impacts of northern development on public health. It will also apply various measures to facilitate access to health and social services in the North. Last, working with the communities concerned, it will focus on preventing and dealing with urgent social and health problems that may bring young people and adults before the courts. It will give priority to offering a continuum of services with better coordination between the partners responsible, and on anticipating the effects of development projects on the health of communities in northern Québec. The MSSS, the Ministère de la Sécurité publique (MSP), the Ministère de la Justice (MJQ), the SCF and the SAA will all work together in this field.

The government has also set the priority of preventing bullying and fighting it in all its forms, for all age groups. Under the leadership of the Ministère de la Famille (MFA) and the SAA, the action plan on bullying and cyberbullying that the government intends to implement will take into account the realities and specific needs of the northern and aboriginal population.

THE SAQIJUQ PROJECT IN **NUNAVIK**: AN EXAMPLE OF JOINT ACTION

The Saqijuq project offers a model for community intervention adapted to Inuit realities. It proposes joint action by all players to apply coordinated solutions to the problems of addiction and domestic violence, in particular.

One of the objectives of the Saqijuq project is to combat the negative impacts of drug and alcohol abuse by mobilizing Inuit communities, Inuit organizations and the government departments and bodies concerned. If this type of project, based on the wishes of the community, is successful, it could serve as an example for other social projects targeting changes in behaviour patterns.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELDS OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND JUSTICE

Improve access to health and social services for clients in the North

- By supporting work in the region to enhance the supply of general social services, especially the implementation of a 24/7 pyscho-social telephone hotline (Info-social) and the consolidation of a 24/7 crisis intervention service in the community.
- By implementing programs that serve young people and their families, especially programs to target neglect, crisis intervention programs, and programs for intensive monitoring in the community.
- By consolidating addiction treatment services (alcohol, drugs and games of chance and gambling).
- By facilitating the transfer of knowledge and expertise to case workers in aboriginal communities if so requested, in connection with these priorities, to help them establish first-line services.
- By improving access to telehealth services.[17]

Anticipate the impacts of development projects on communities in northern Québec

- By creating a tool to monitor demographic changes and population movements in the North; this would highlight local employment pools and identify where pressure on services to the population is liable to be the most acute.
- By providing for better integration of health issues into environmental procedures through a component to assess health impacts, and by introducing measures to monitor the impact of development projects on the key determinants for health.
- By strengthening the ability of professionals to analyze impacts on health.

Take preventive action and intervene in response to priority social problems

- By deploying services as part of a joint response by various partners and government departments and bodies in the fields of public security, justice, health, social services and aboriginal affairs, in a coordinated approach to offer a continuum of services that deal with social issues more adequately.

17 This measure depends on improvements to telecommunications infrastructures (section 6.1.3).

- By integrating measures to take the realities faced by aboriginal women into account in the new government action plan on sexual assault and the future government action plan on sexual exploitation.
- By supporting local and aboriginal communities in the area covered by the Plan Nord in the fight against bullying.

Consolidate and improve services in the field of justice

- By improving access to certain legal services provided face-to-face, or using telecommunications services such as videoconferencing to allow citizens in the North to exercise their rights.

The housing situation

In Nunavik, the serious lack of available housing has led to overcrowding in hundreds of dwellings. Overcrowding, in turn, accelerates the pace at which buildings deteriorate and exacerbates certain problems, including the propagation of infectious diseases. In addition, the cramped conditions can generate social problems, especially when combined with alcohol or drug abuse.

The private housing market, which can be a source of wealth for individuals and communities, is practically inexistent, amounting to around 80 dwellings. The difficulty of purchasing and constructing buildings, their high cost, limited access to credit, the lack of a resale market and a considerable gap between the cost of social housing and the cost of privately-owned property are the main obstacles to the development of a private housing market.

The Société d'habitation du Québec aims to work with its housing partners in Nunavik to establish a financial tool for the repurchase of private property, the *Fonds de rachat*. The Fonds will compensate for the lack of a resale market for private houses, reassuring purchasers and financial institutions and facilitating access to credit for residents in the region. It will operate temporarily until the market is able to regulate itself.

In addition to its high cost, the housing provided by certain employers in the North for their workforce can be a source of friction. The housing, whose quality varies depending on the organization concerned, is not available to local employees because of various administrative rules.

The situation is different, but no less a concern, in the rest of the area covered by the Plan Nord. The number of new mining projects has led to a genuine housing crisis in some municipalities in the resource regions. In 2014, for example, the vacancy rate in Sept-Îles was 1.1%, compared to 2.9% in Québec as a whole. Northern development and the arrival of new workers may lead to a rapid increase in the demand for housing in these localities.

In addition, there are currently few resources to help people with special needs such as seniors with reduced mobility, low-income workers, the disabled and female victims of violence, to find suitable housing. The AccèsLogis Québec program is designed to meet some of these needs. Temporary assistance measures for remote, sparsely populated regions have been introduced to compensate for high construction costs.

High construction costs are also a major problem with a direct impact on the ability of regional authorities, for example in Nunavik, to increase the number of available dwellings.

Housing is a responsibility of the Government of Canada in on-reserve aboriginal communities, where overcrowding and obsolete buildings are also a problem.

The Québec government intends to continue its efforts to improve and diversify the availability of housing in the Kativik region. Priority will be given to the construction of various types of housing to meet the range of specific needs of the population in this part of northern Québec.

The Québec government will also work on harmonizing the actions of its departments and bodies, and of other partners, in the field of housing, especially in connection with housing for workers.

It will also continue to support the demands of various aboriginal communities to obtain increased funding from the Government of Canada for housing units in order to increase the quantity of housing available for the population.

Sustainable economic development requires the presence of infrastructures to meet the varied needs of the area's inhabitants. As part of the implementation of the Plan Nord, the government will support the various actions undertaken by regional players to promote sustainable economic development in the region and provide a living, and a place to live, for all.

Last, an effort must be made to find new ways of building and occupying dwellings, in order to reduce direct and indirect costs and also to increase their usable life.

THE PIVALLIANIQ PLAN IN **NUNAVIK**: A PACT FOR BETTER LIVING

Pivallianiq was launched in 2012. It includes various measures to raise awareness and provide training to allow the Nunavik population to take more responsibility and gain a feeling of pride in their housing and the wellbeing of their communities. Over 600 households are already active participants in the plan, and many more children and young people have attended school workshops and street activities.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF ACCESS TO HOUSING

- Revise the parameters of the Home Ownership and Renovation Program for the Kativik Region to ensure that it provides an adequate response to residents' needs.
- Take part in catch-up work to deal with the shortage of housing by building 90 additional dwellings in Nunavik:
  - 70 new public housing units, including 10 multi-generational units.
  - 20 new private units via the Home Ownership and Renovation Program for the Kativik Region.
- Maintain the measures to for land occupancy aimed at supporting the construction of affordable housing to meet specific needs in regions located north of the 49th parallel, under the AccèsLogis Québec Program.
- Establish financial tools to ensure that sufficient hypothecary credit is available for residents in the Kativik region and that building values remain stable, in particular via a repurchasing fund.
- Stimulate the construction of private dwellings in regions other than Nunavik via the Affordable Housing Québec Program (private component), which aims to promote the construction of affordable rental units for low-income households in municipalities with a low vacancy rate for rented housing.
- Establish a northern housing laboratory to stimulate research on northern housing issues and participate in specific projects.

4.2.5 Give priority to cultural development agreements as a lever for action by northern communities

With the deployment of the Plan Nord, northern populations will experience a substantial degree of economic development in the coming years. aboriginal nations and local communities hope that their culture and identity will also gain from this development.

For this purpose, it will be necessary to establish tools that will allow local and aboriginal cultures to plan for their ongoing survival and increase support for the development of cultures and their adoption by young people.

The role played by young people will be central in rejuvenating cultures, avoiding a process of folklorization, allowing them to move into the modern age and helping them flourish, at both the Québec and international levels. The involvement of young people will allow the implementation of cultural activities that will help keep cultures alive.

By ensuring that their culture remains vibrant, the communities affected by the Plan Nord will be able to build a strong relationship with the rest of Québec that takes their identity into account. Aboriginal communities must also be given access to the tools they need to preserve the vitality of their language, which lies at the heart of their cultural identity. The survival of the language and its transmission as the mother tongue of future generations are vital concerns for aboriginal communities.

Through the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications (MCC), the government will establish the conditions needed to allow the cultural practices of the northern populations to prosper, compensating for the current social context, isolation and language factors.

Partnership agreements are the central element in the support provided by the government for the cultural development of northern communities. Through the agreements signed over a period of almost 30 years with northern communities, the government will be able to contribute to the cultural development of the northern population. One of the key advantages of the partnership agreements is their flexibility, their ability to adapt to the specific realities faced by the partners and, in some cases, the fact that they can be modified during implementation. They also reflect the specific features of each northern community and territory.

The partnership agreements enable the government to intervene in the areas identified as priorities by its northern partners.

The government intends to continue to provide support to promote and revitalize aboriginal languages, an aspect considered a priority by all aboriginal communities. It will also highlight the cultural heritage of northern communities, another key issue in a context of accelerated industrial development.

This context for development offers opportunities for the cultural activities of aboriginal and non-aboriginal creative artists. Lacking the conventional points of reference, these artists have limited possibilities for development in remote or isolated regions where creation or performance spaces may not even exist. To remedy the situation, the government intends to review its standards and practices to encourage a range of northern cultural practices and their development, at the international level, through projects, cooperation and exchanges.

Last, the growth of new technologies opens up new avenues that may significantly help to correct the difficulties created by distance and isolation. The younger generation is especially conversant with new technologies, pointing to the importance of promoting the development of information and communications in the North.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

- Sign or enhance cultural development agreements with aboriginal nations and northern partners.
- Help establish cultural centres to preserve, develop and disseminate culture, the arts and heritage within multi-purpose facilities.
- Promote artists from the North in the application of the policy integrating the arts with architecture and with the environment of government and publics buildings and sites.
- Continue to adapt programs and services to give northern partners access to culture.
- Help aboriginal populations recognize, protect and enhance their languages.
- Elaborate and adopt an action plan to highlight the value of the northern cultural heritage.
- Promote cultural exchanges at the international level to contribute to the dissemination of aboriginal values.

4.2.6 Ensure security in the area covered by the Plan Nord

The development of northern Québec will have impacts that will lead, in particular, to increased risks in the area of public security and civil protection. This will require the application of programs, measures and specific intervention methods by the government departments and bodies concerned. There will be a need, in particular, for police services adapted to the realities of the North.

Similarly, the area covered by the Plan Nord is not immune to natural or man-made events that pose a threat to people's lives or safety or, more generally, have a major impact on the normal course of activities in the community where they occur. The development of northern Québec will involve the construction of infrastructures and an increased human presence in northern regions. This may in itself become a factor that increases certain risks by making it more likely that an event will occur or by aggravating its consequences. This situation is a matter for concern, especially since communities and essential infrastructures in the North are exposed to risks that may be amplified by climate change.

Given that many areas have few or no roads or other infrastructures, and given the distances involved, it becomes more difficult to intervene in the event of an emergency such as a forest fire or another natural or man-made disaster. This is why the public security services made available to northern communities must be adjusted to meet the new needs generated by the implementation of the Plan Nord. A civil protection approach must be defined, with a focus on prevention and preparedness in order to minimize the impact of natural or man-made disasters. Special attention must be paid to providing suitable training for first-line responders (communities and risk generators) for such events. The civil protection plans of all the stakeholders must be harmonized.

Civil protection is a shared responsibility, and must be addressed in a comprehensive, integrated way. All players (including citizens, communities/municipalities, government departments and bodies, enterprises, etc.) must take responsibility, become involved and make an effort to ensure that communities, enterprises and investments remain resilient in a context of northern development and adaptation to climate change. The government will establish various measures to adapt to the new needs generated by the Plan Nord and improve police services, working with the partners concerned to modify their civil protection plans to deal with natural or man-made disasters. Stakeholders must be made more aware of their roles and responsibilities as part of the four dimensions of civil protection: prevention, preparation, intervention and recovery.

An integrated approach to the management of forest fire risks will be drawn up under the Civil Protection Act, in compliance with existing coordination procedures. The projects will be coordinated by the MSP with input from all the government partners concerned. Initiatives will be based on measures that contribute to the safety of the population and the protection of infrastructures and strategic investments while respecting the area's ecological integrity.

As part of the approach, support will be provided for communities, mining companies, outfitting operations and other enterprises that wish to establish prevention, preparation, intervention and recovery measures adapted to the new needs created by northern development.

There are clear differences between the northern communities in terms of their social vulnerability and their ability to act and respond. Not all of these communities have the strategies they need to intervene swiftly and effectively.

Through the MSP, the government intends to promote the establishment of partnerships between local and regional organizations and the government departments and bodies concerned to ensure concerted, consistent actions in the field of civil protection.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF PUBLIC SECURITY

- Adopt an integrated management approach for risks connected with forest fires, with input from all players.
- Establish programs and tools adapted to the new needs generated by the Plan Nord in order to reduce risks and ensure a rapid and effective response in the event of an emergency.
- Monitor regions and local and aboriginal communities in connection with strategic and operational issues with an impact on public security and police services.
- Support and advise local and aboriginal communities on the establishment of emergency prevention and preparedness measures, as well as disaster recovery measures.

Moose.
Photo credit: Christian Chevalier

Québec has a rich and unique Nordic heritage. It still retains vast stretches of land, in addition to lakes and rivers that are in pristine condition or have remained relatively undisturbed. The biodiversity of this vast territory, where the human footprint is still small and a high degree of naturalness can be found, constitutes an important symbol of identity for the people who live there and for the whole of Québec.

5.1 Objectives for 2035

To protect the environment and conserve biodiversity in the North, the Plan Nord targets three main, and closely-related, objectives:

- By 2035, dedicate 50% of the area covered by the Plan Nord to non-industrial purposes, protection of the environment and the safeguarding of biodiversity.
- Gain knowledge about the area's physical and ecological environment in order to identify the most appropriate conservation measures and recognize the potential for development,
- Ensure efficient processes for environmental assessment.

Based on rigorous scientific knowledge, these objectives also aim to attain efficiency in the environmental analyses of projects and the issuing of authorizations. They also require the establishment of effective conservation measures for the area covered by the Plan Nord. In addition, development projects will be planned and carried out using methods that respect the environment and that take environmental considerations into account during the decision-making process.

5.2 Priority actions for 2015-2020

In this field, the government has created an action plan with four priority actions. The first objective is to designate 20% of the territory as protected areas by 2020.[18] The government also intends to develop knowledge about northern environments so as to identify the most efficient conservation measures. In addition, it will continue to work toward the establishment of new national parks, as it has over the past ten years. Last, it will ensure that development projects completed throughout the area covered by the Plan Nord will be governed by efficient environmental evaluation processes and will be based on best practices.

5.2.1 By 2020, establish protected areas in 20 % of the area covered by the Plan Nord

The significant potential for the development of natural resources requires sustainable and responsible management. Sufficient knowledge of the environment and an emphasis on ecological considerations integrated into the responsible development of resources constitutes a fundamental element of a balanced and viable approach to development.

The renewed Plan Nord offers an opportunity to establish and specify conservation measures to protect 50% of the land lying north of the 49th parallel from industrial activities, including a measure to establish protected areas.

More specifically, by 2020, the Government of Québec aims to:

- Designate 20% of the area covered under the Plan Nord as protected areas, with at least 12% comprised of boreal forest north of the 49th parallel.
- Introduce a mechanism for the priority allocation of the remaining 30% of the area for non-industrial activities, dedicated to the environment, the safeguarding of biodiversity and the promotion of various types of development.

Implement the measures to protect 50% of the area covered by the Plan Nord from industrial activities by a series of actions related to the four components of conservation:

- Preservation—mainly through the establishment of a network of protected areas.
- Protection—through the use of legal means, regulations and best practices with regard to development, harvesting activities and the various ways the land is used.
- Sustainable use—based on a high level of knowledge and risk management that must be supported by ecological planning exercises, development work and the development of the natural environment, and on development that respects the carrying capacity of the ecosystems.
- Restoration—to ensure that ecosystems provide the biological and ecological services that they offer naturally.

18 A protected area is "an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means.": [Online] [www.mddelcc.gouv.qc.ca/biodiversite/aires_protegees/aires_Québec-en.htm].

The strategic conservation approach envisioned for the area covered by the Plan Nord will:

- Transform government commitments into concrete and measurable actions.
- Ensure the necessary and desired balance between conservation interventions for biological diversity, economic development and the satisfaction of society's needs.
- Allow Québec to fulfil its commitment to the international objectives established in the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), its 2011-2020 Strategic Plan and the objectives set in Aichi.
- Make the conservation of biological diversity a distinct mark of excellence for Québec, an advantage for the new economy and a new, sustainable approach to the region and its resources.

For all the conservation measures related to the Plan Nord, the government wishes to closely work with the local and aboriginal communities concerned, their representatives with responsibility for the development of the region and its resources, and environmental and conservation organizations.

Steps have already been taken to establish protected areas in the Rivière Kovik and Rivière Broadback watersheds.

To ensure that the objectives of environmental protection and safeguarding of biodiversity are reached, the Société du Plan Nord will also ensure increased collaboration between the various stakeholders working in the region, including environmental and industrial associations.

5.2.2 Characterize the land base to target the most appropriate conservation measures

In order to protect 50% of the northern area from industrial activities, the planning of conservation activities must be supported by in-depth knowledge of the land base, through measures:

- to extend geo-physical and ecological knowledge, including the knowledge of fauna, flora and ecosystems, to determine the most appropriate conservation measures and characterize the potential for development.
- to conduct specific exercises to integrate ecological variables using adapted tools such as ecological and territorial planning, in places where major development is under consideration and where the land is more sensitive to potential development.

5.2.3 Continue to develop national parks as part of the target for protected areas

In the last ten years, three national parks have been created in Nunavik:

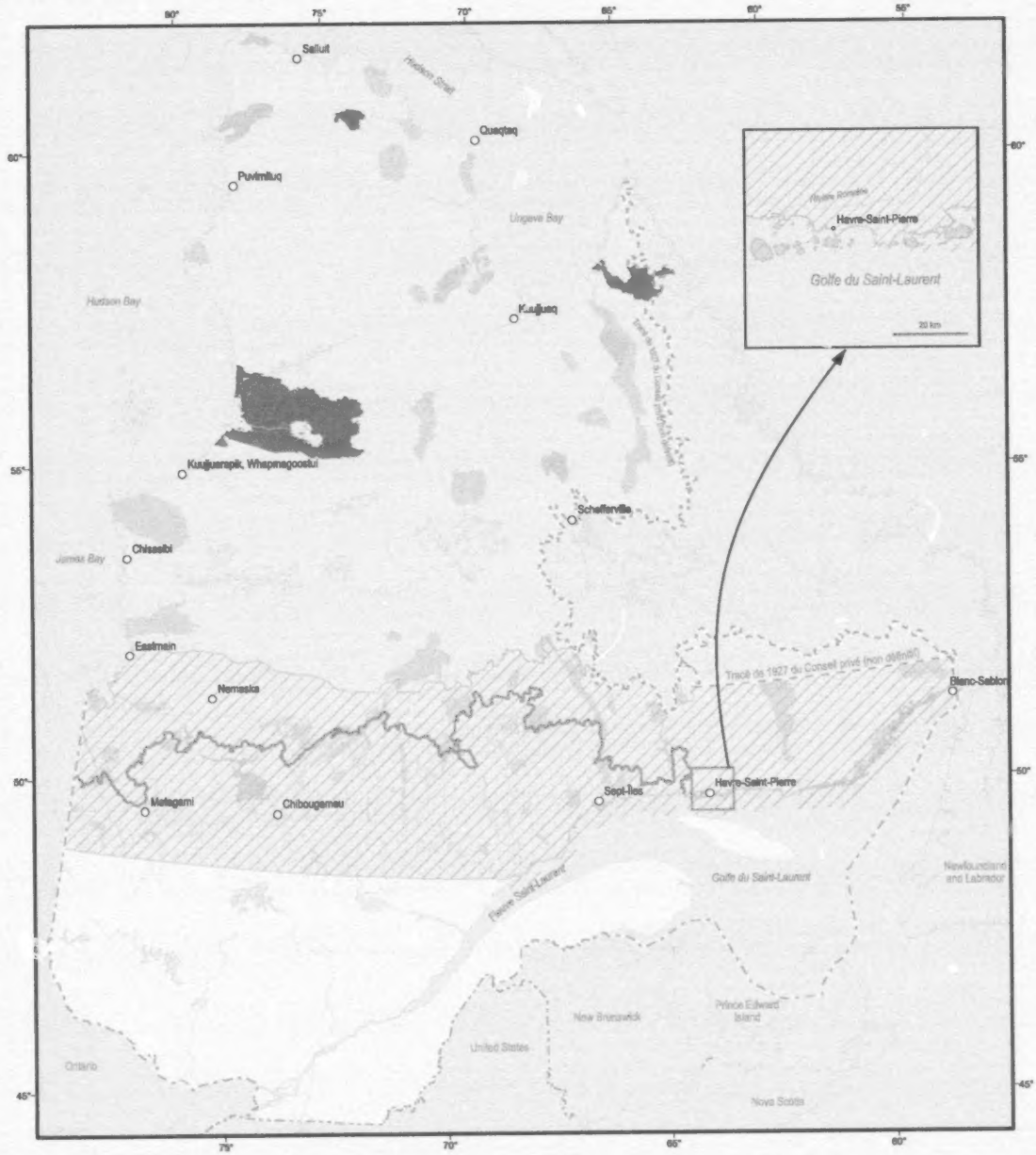
- The Parc national des Pingualuit, created in 2004, is the result of collaboration between the Government of Québec, the Inuit, the Kativik Regional Government and Makivik Corporation. It covers an area of 1,133.9 km^2. The primary feature of the park is the Pingualuit meteorite crater, one of the youngest and best preserved craters in the world.
- The Parc national Kuururjuaq was created in 2009 in collaboration with Inuit organizations. It covers an area of 4,460.8 km^2 and is located to the east of Ungava Bay. It offers some of the most spectacular landscapes in Québec. In the eastern region of the park, Mont d'Iberville dominates the Torngat mountain highlands at 1,646 m in altitude, making it the tallest mountain in Québec.

- The Parc national Tursujuq was officially created in 2013. With an area of 26,106.7 km², it is the largest national park in Québec, as well as in eastern continental North America.

Through the MFFP, the government intends to continue the process of establishing new national parks within the framework of the Plan Nord. Work is underway on three major projects:

- The Parc national Ulittaniujalik project concerns a region located along the majestic George river, in Nunavik, approximately 120 kilometres south of the village of Kangiqsualujjuaq. The territory proposed for this project covers an area of approximately 5,272 km². The objective is to protect a representative sample of the natural region of the George River plateau.
- The Parc national Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish will be created, in partnership with the Mistissini Cree Nation, to protect a vast territory of over 11,000 km². This territory includes the Otish Mountains which are the source of many great rivers, including the Temiscamie River which winds through the boreal forest to Albanel lake. The creation of this park would protect the largest freshwater lake in Québec, Lac Mistassini, and promote the region's rich cultural heritage and history.
- The Parc national Assinica project, which is under development with the four Cree communities concerned, involves a protected area located in the boreal forest approximately twenty kilometres to the north of the Cree village of Oujé-Bougoumou and north of the cities of Chapais and Chibougamau. This territory is in large part composed of waterways covering an area of 3,193 km². It is anticipated that the future park will be managed by the Oujé-Bougoumou Cree community (Map 8).

Map 8 - Area covered by the 50% target* - Existing protected areas (March 2015)



Area covered by the Plan Nord

Northern limit for timber allocations

Boreal forest north of the 49th parallel

Protected areas

- Canada National Park Reserve
- Québec National Park Reserve
- Québec National Park
- Other protected area

*By 2035, dedicate 50% of the area covered by the Plan Nord to non-industrial purposes, environmental protection and biodiversity conservation

Borders

- International border
- Interprovincial border
- Québec — Newfoundland and Labrador border (non-definitive)

Zone	Current % protected	Target	% difference
Plan nord (northern Québec)	10.75	20.0	9.25
Boreal forest (north of 49th)	9.34	12.0	2.66

Sources

Data	Organization	Year
Spatial organization	MFFP	2010
Protected areas	MDDELCC	2014

Production

Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques

© Gouvernement du Québec, 2015

0 200 km

5.2.4 Ensure efficient environmental assessment processes

In the environmental protection field, the government will continue to act in compliance with the conventions, laws, regulations and specific agreements on the environment that apply in the area covered by the Plan Nord, while respecting its constitutional obligation to conduct consultations with Aboriginals.

It will ensure that development projects are only implemented following strict environmental analyses that respect the processes in place and the populations concerned, giving priority to a support/advisory approach.

The government will act with efficiency, diligence and rigour with respect to all the prior authorizations needed for project development, and will apply all the required supervisory mechanisms. Concrete initiatives will be implemented to improve the transparency and application of the processes to make them more efficient.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENT

- By 2035, dedicate 50% of the area covered by the Plan Nord to non-industrial purposes, protection of the environment and the safeguarding of biodiversity:
  - a total of 20% of protected areas in the area covered by the Plan Nord by 2020, of which at least 12% will comprise boreal forest north of the 49th parallel.
  - a mechanism for the priority allocation of the remaining 30% of the area for non-industrial activities.
- Extend geo-physical and ecological knowledge of the land base.
- Elaborate and conduct ecological planning exercises and increase the weight of ecological information in the decision-making process.
- Improve the public consultation process in terms of transparency and accessibility by using new technologies and developing communication tools.
- Continue to develop national parks.

ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

This vast territory, little known and fragile, is evolving, specifically as a result of climate change which can be seen it:

- Damage to permafrost and changes in soil water regimes.
- Changes to ice conditions and storm patterns.
- Coastal erosion.
- More frequent warm trends that have repercussions on the migration of species and increase the vulnerability of forests to insect attacks.

To address the difficulties resulting from climate change, the government will continue to collaborate with local and aboriginal communities as well as the Ouranos[19] consortium to develop solutions to adapt to the effects of these changes. The government will also continue with the implementation of its 2013-2020 government strategy for adaptation to climate change, made public in 2012, which exposes the plan for all government actions to increase Québec's resiliency in the face of a changing climate.

19 Ouranos is a consortium that brings together 450 scientists and professionals from diverse disciplines. Its mission is to acquire and develop knowledge about climate change and its impacts, as well as socioeconomic and environmental vulnerabilities, so as to inform decision-makers about the evolution of the climate and advise them for the identification, evaluation, promotion and implementation of local and regional adaptation strategies. [Online] [www.ouranos.ca/en/default.php].

Matagami and surrounding area.
Photo credit: Jean-Pierre Huard

The business environment and financial support measures established by the government will help create the conditions needed to attract private investment to northern Québec. However, the vastness of the area concerned, the remoteness of the communities, the lack of links between northern and southern Québec and access to outside markets are all factors that may limit northern development.

If there is one factor on which the State has a decisive influence, it is the development of strategic transportation, energy and communications infrastructures. To develop the North sustainably and in a way that brings concrete benefits to local communities and all Quebecers, it must be equipped with the necessary infrastructures, in keeping with a long-term vision for development that allows evolving needs in Québec to be taken into account.

In addition, reliable, valid data is needed to ensure the sustainable and integrated development of northern Québec. An in-depth understanding of the land and population, including the aboriginal population, is essential in order to introduce new programs or adapt existing programs for the North. The Plan Nord project must also be publicized and promoted in Canada and around the world, in order to attract investors and promote investment and research partnerships.

6.1 Facilitate access to the land

Infrastructures—harbours, railways, airports and roads—and their strategic development over the long term are cornerstones for the deployment of the Plan Nord. Although the area already has clear strategic advantages in the field of transportation infrastructures, the challenge of access to the land is two-fold:

- Existing infrastructures are aging and require major reconstruction work to extend their useful life.
- The various transportation modes must be part of a strategic, coherent network if they are to promote the economic potential of the North and provide adequate services for the northern population.

The government, via the Société du Plan Nord and with assistance from the MTQ, will coordinate the preparation and implementation of a comprehensive, integrated plan for all modes of transportation in the area covered by the Plan Nord. It will request input from the government departments and bodies concerned, regional authorities, including the James Bay Development Corporation, aboriginal nations and companies already operating or about to operate in the area.

The government intends to draw up policies and directives for the planning, deployment, financing and shared use of transportation infrastructures in the area covered by the Plan Nord, in particular to minimize their environmental footprint and optimize their efficiency while reducing transportation costs for all enterprises working in the area, including those developing its natural resources.

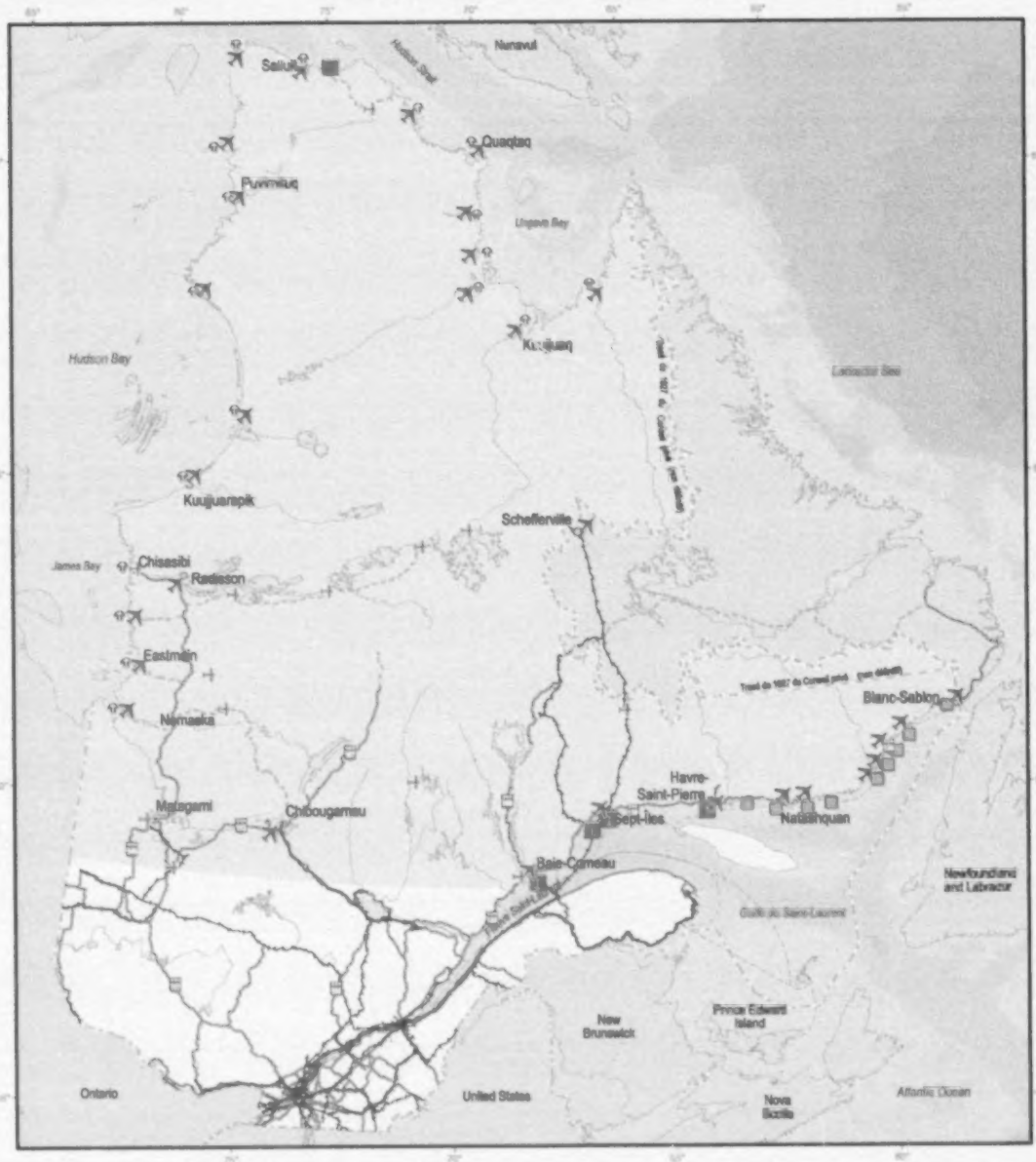
The process will be based on a multimodal approach, giving priority to the improvement of existing transportation infrastructures to increase their capacity and efficiency while minimizing their environmental footprint. It will also identify the nature and characteristics of the complementary infrastructures needed to ensure optimum service delivery for northern areas.

The following objectives will be set for each of the main transportation modes:

- **For maritime transportation:** maximize the unique possibilities offered by the Estuary and Gulf of St. Lawrence via the implementation of the Québec Maritime Strategy. It is important to note that the federal government has a role to play in financing the maintenance of these infrastructures. In 2002, the Québec government undertook, as part of the Sanarrutik Agreement, to fund daily maintenance costs, including major reparations, subject to federal contribution, under conditions to be agreed upon between the parties.
- **For rail transportation:** ensure an adequate provision of services for all new developments, especially in the mining sector which uses most of the network's current capacity. This capacity could become insufficient following the implementation and expansion of several mining projects in the Labrador Trough, pointing to the need to assess the feasibility of a new rail link between the Labrador Trough and the port of Sept-Îles.
- **For air transportation:** propose a development model for northern Québec that will ensure access and cost-sharing for the benefit of all. The model must take into consideration the essential role played by air travel in northern communities and tourism development, and in the facilitation of mineral prospection, scientific research and environmental surveys. This will help identify solutions to the issues connected with security and the high cost of air transportation, which currently limit access.
- **For road transportation:** consolidate the current road network by investing in the highways that constitute the backbone for northern regions, in particular Route 389 and 138 in the Côte-Nord region and the Route de la Baie-James in the Nord-du-Québec region. The development model should also allow for separate standards for the northern network, adapted to northern realities, and accommodate separate funding models, for the benefit of Québec as a whole.

Map 9 - Transportation infrastructures

Transportation infrastructures



Area covered by the Plan Nord

Transportation infrastructures

- Regional airport
- local airport
- Breakwater
- Port
- Wharf
- Railway
- Maritime service

Borders

- International border
- Interprovincial border
- Québec – Newfoundland and Labrador border (non-definitive)

Sources

Data	Organization	Year
Spatial organization	MERN	2015
Transportation infrastructures	MERN	2015

Production

Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles
Direction générale de l'information géographique
Note: This document has no legal value.

© Gouvernement du Québec, 2015

Existing infrastructures belonging to Hydro-Québec (HQ), including its airstrips, could also be used to provide access to the North. However, the use of these infrastructures must be achieved at zero cost to HQ. Discussions between potential users and HQ must be held to establish a fair fee structure and safe and acceptable conditions of use.

Consideration must be given to previously signed agreements, in particular with the Crees, that specify that the sites of infrastructures created for the construction of HQ facilities will be returned to their natural state once the project has been completed.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORTATION

- Ensure the ongoing viability of maritime infrastructures in Nunavik.
- Improve access and increase the capacity of the port of Sept-Îles to meet the needs of mining companies.
- Ensure that the capacity and efficiency of the rail services between the Labrador Trough and the port of Sept-Îles are increased to meet the needs of mining companies.
- Continue to improve northern airports.
- Ensure a permanent, safe road network adapted to northern characteristics:
  - by defining a government funding strategy for the extension of route 138 and the improvement of route 389.
  - by ensuring adequate funding for maintenance and reconstruction work on the Route de la Baie-James.
  - by undertaking reconstruction work on the road linking Schefferville to Kawawachikamach.
  - by establishing a new category of northern road with standards adapted to the northern context.
- Draw up policies and directives for the planning, financing, commissioning and shared use of transportation infrastructures in the area covered by the Plan Nord.
- Continue discussions on the economic perspectives for the development of strategic multimodal infrastructures in the Nord-du-Québec region.

6.2 Improve telecommunications infrastructures

Access to digital technologies is an essential component in the socio-economic development of the area and the safety and wellbeing of northern populations, whether in connection with health, education or justice services or other services provided by the government and enterprises. The development and availability of telecommunications technologies are also essential elements for the attraction and retention of workers and enterprises in remote region.

Although several telecommunications projects have emerged or continue to develop in the area covered by the Plan Nord in recent years, some specific needs still need to be met.

NUNAVIK

Satellite telecommunications

A satellite telecommunications service has been offered in 14 communities since 2004 by Tamaani Internet, a division of the Kativik Regional Government. Despite an increase in satellite capacity since 2007, the current infrastructures cannot meet the demand from commercial enterprises and public service suppliers. A task force coordinated by the Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor has been mandated to find ways to improve services to the population in Nunavik and to ensure the long-term sustainability of telecommunications services, especially in terms of funding. It has recommended the creation of an undersea fibre optic network. To deploy this network, the following stages must be completed:

- Maintain satellite services during the transition to the fibre optic network.
- Coordinate the work of the various partners and design a financial model.
- Complete a feasibility study for telecommunications infrastructures in Nunavik.
- Lay the undersea cable and connect the communities concerned.

EEYOU ITSCHEE BAIE-JAMES TERRITORY

Fibre optics

In the Eeyou Itschee Baie-James territory, the Eeyou Communications Network (ECN), a not-for-profit corporation formed by Cree and James Bay communities, is deploying a broadband fibre optic network to meet the needs of the public, institutions and enterprises. This regional network is being deployed in two phases.

The first phase, completed in July 2011, connected 11 communities using fibre optics.

The second phase, estimated at $22.3 million, is under development. It will connect the communities of Eastmain and Waskaganish and service point located at Km 381 on the Route de la Baie-James. The ECN also hopes to connect the Cree community of Whapmagoostui, situated at the most northerly location.

This initiative, connected with other telecommunications projects planned in the area covered by the Plan Nord, could lead to the creation of a communications loop, which would make the network more robust and reliable.

BASSE-CÔTE-NORD

Access to high-speed Internet

The part of the Côte-Nord east of Natashquan does not have full high-speed Internet service. Over 400 kilometres distance along the Basse-Côte-Nord between Kegaska and Blanc-Sablon, only schools and municipalities have high-speed Internet access.

In 2010, a feasibility study for the creation of a high-speed Internet network found that 3,687 buildings (residential, commercial and institutional) out of 4,269 on the Basse-Côte-Nord were not yet connected.

As in other regions in Québec in the area covered by the Plan Nord, there are no continuous roads between the villages of Kegaska and Bonne-Espérance, complicating the creation of a high-speed network. In addition, the Basse-Côte-Nord has almost 6,000 inhabitants spread over a wide area, increasing the expense and reducing the cost-effectiveness of the network.

VILLE DE SCHEFFERVILLE

From satellites to fibre optics

In the Côte-Nord region, a project to connect Ville de Schefferville using fibre optics is under way. The project is being promoted by Naskapi Immuun, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach. Telecommunications services in the region are still provided by limited and costly satellite coverage. To offer modern telecommunications services, a fibre optic link must be laid from Labrador City to Schefferville along the railway, with a fibre optic network for service to clients. Currently, technical specifications are being prepared prior to a call for bids for the project.

The lack of telecommunications services can be explained by the fact that it is not cost-effective for private enterprises to invest in infrastructures and broadband Internet services in remote regions because of the small consumer base and the high costs associated with the building of infrastructures and delivering services. The construction of new power transmission lines by Hydro-Québec in the area covered by the Plan Nord could create a way to reduce implementation costs by including a way to include fibre optic cables.

To address this issue, the government will establish a strategy to gradually integrate all telecommunications projects in the area covered by the Plan Nord. This will make it possible to offer communities and enterprises in northern Québec reliable, integrated and permanent Internet telecommunications, to improve the service they receive and to ensure fair treatment compared to the rest of Québec. It is important to note that the upgrading of telecommunications infrastructures in northern Québec matches the aim of the federal government to develop Internet access in the Canadian Far North.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2015-2020 IN THE FIELD OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- Complete a master plan for a fibre optic-based telecommunications network serving the whole of the area covered by the Plan Nord through integrated planning for the following projects:
  - Nunavik project (Inuit): complete a feasibility study and prepare technical specifications for the creation of a fibre optic and satellite network.
  - Eeyou communications network project (Crees): add the communities of Eastmain, Waskaganish and possibly Whapmagoostui to the fibre optic network.
  - Schefferville regional project (Naskapis): design, plan and implement a fibre optic project from Labrador City to Schefferville.
- Improve the high-speed Internet network on the Basse-Côte-Nord.

6.3 Increase scientific knowledge and promote its application

Northern development and the transformations under way in the area covered by the Plan Nord raise a number of issues that concern the research and innovation community. All the components of the Plan Nord generate a need for research and for the gathering of scientific data and knowledge. This information is needed to ensure that actions are planned effectively in a way that ensures respect for communities.

To develop the North, the government will have to invest strategically in the coming years, in particular to increase access to the land. In a context of climate change and with a unique environment to protect, the government must be able to rely on cutting-edge expertise and intervene in a sustainable manner.

In-depth knowledge of all the social, economic and environmental factors is essential to develop the full potential of the North, protect it and inhabit it.

The government will, for this purpose, create a nordic institute for Québec, the Institut nordique du Québec, as a pathfinder project to respond to the research objective while ensuring a balance between the social, economic and environmental dimensions. The institute will bring a range of expertise in the natural, social, health and engineering sciences to bear on the question of sustainable development in the North, in an interdisciplinary, inter-institutional centre for research and innovation, with the involvement of Université Laval, McGill University and the Institut national de recherche scientifique. The centre will be located on the Université Laval campus in Québec City, and will also have offices in the area covered by the Plan Nord. To contribute to the creation of the new centre, the Québec government's 2014-2015 budget includes an allocation of $3 million over three years, taken from the Fonds du Plan Nord.

Thanks to the Institut nordique du Québec, it will be possible to deploy a number of research and technology transfer platforms that will incorporate aboriginal knowledge and meet the needs of stakeholders, whether northern communities, the government or the private sector. The institute will help attract the most talented science and technology experts, providing both a source of social and technological innovation and sustainable economic leverage. Québec will position itself as a national and international leader in the field of northern research. The institute will assess ways to adapt more effectively to climate change and will give government and private-sector decision-makers access to the scientific knowledge and technical know-how they need to ensure the harmonious development of northern Québec.

The institute will work closely with other research establishments and teams in Québec and Canada such as college-level technology transfer centres, aboriginal services, the ArcticNet network, Québec's chief scientist and government researchers.

Similarly, the Fonds de recherche du Québec[20] will work with the Société du Plan Nord to identify priority areas for northern research. The government hopes to establish an innovative approach for coherent, complementary funding. Three funds—the Nature and Technology, Health, and Society and Culture funds—will be asked to contribute as part of an integrated approach.

Innovation is the main lever for increased productivity and social and economic development, playing a role in all fields and all sectors of activity. The ability to meet the challenges raised by the Plan Nord will depend on an ability to innovate and pool the strengths of all innovators in the institutional and private sectors, whether in Québec or abroad.

20. Fonds de recherche du Québec. [Online] [http://www.frq.gouv.qc.ca/].

PRIORITY ACTION FOR 2015-2020
IN THE FIELD OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Support the creation of the Institut nordique du Québec and assist the research partners involved.

6.4 Promote the Plan Nord in Canada and abroad

To ensure the successful implementation of the Plan Nord, intergovernmental relations will have to be conducted in a joint, coordinated fashion to uphold and defend Québec's interests.

Intergovernmental relations are at the heart of Canadian federalism, which is based on a sharing of constitutional powers between the central and federated states, and on respect for the autonomy of each federated state in its areas of jurisdiction. Collaboration, coordination and cooperation are all necessary to in order to reach an agreement, achieve shared objectives and ensure Québec's advancement, for the benefit of the population as a whole.

All the government departments and bodies involved, with assistance from the Secrétariat aux affaires intergouvernementales canadiennes, will work to improve collaboration between the Québec government, the governments of the other provinces and territories and the federal government with respect to northern issues. This approach will help realize the development prospects for the area covered by the Plan Nord.

The federal government's involvement is also essential to improve the living conditions of aboriginal populations. Several key sectors including housing, health and education are wholly or partly under its jurisdiction.

The federal government's commitment to the relaunching of the Plan Nord, especially at the financial level, must apply to certain priority areas such as housing in aboriginal communities, strategic transportation infrastructures, and Internet access for the residents of Nunavik and other northern communities. Québec will ensure that it receives its fair share of federal commitments in the field of northern development.

Québec's participation in various inter-governmental forums, including the Northern Development Ministers Forum, will provide an opportunity for the sharing of information, best practices and expert knowledge with regard to various northern development issues.

The Plan Nord will also be implemented against the backdrop of an extremely competitive international environment, where natural resource prices can fluctuate widely and states and governments vie with each other to attract foreign investors and qualified workers. Given this context, concerted action, along with international representation, prospection and promotion activities will be essential if the objectives of the Plan Nord are to be achieved.

The Québec government, under the guidance of the Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie (MRIF), will conduct a broad, sustained and original international campaign to promote the unique comparative advantages of this major project. The campaign will publicize Québec's leadership in the field of northern development and the effort made to ensure the social acceptability of the Plan Nord. The government will also, through the joint actions of its departments and bodies, including the MEIE and Investissement Québec, establish a strategy to attract investment, promote exports and cooperate with international partners.

Harrington Harbour.
Photo credit: TQ/C Bouchard

To implement the Plan Nord, the government intends to set up a governance structure adapted to the objectives it has set, and to ensure the social acceptability of the Plan for local and aboriginal communities.

7.1 Governance

To coordinate and apply the actions needed to implement the Plan Nord, the government has chosen to create a governance structure adapted to the specific characteristics of the North and to the needs of local and aboriginal communities.

7.1.1 The Société du Plan Nord

On December 4, 2014, the Act respecting the Société du Plan Nord was passed. Under the Act, the Société du Plan Nord becomes the key authority for the deployment of the various components of the Plan Nord. Its mission is to contribute, in collaboration with the representatives of the regions and the aboriginal nations concerned, as well as the private sector, to the integrated and coherent development of the area covered by the Plan Nord, in keeping with the principle of sustainable development and in accordance with the policy directions defined by the Government in relation to the Plan Nord.

Its mission is also to:

- Coordinate infrastructure projects and, if applicable, engage in infrastructure development and operation, alone or in partnership, including as a rail carrier.
- Assist and support local and aboriginal communities in their community and socio-economic development projects, among others.
- Carry out or contribute to research and development activities as well as activities to acquire knowledge of the area.

- Contribute to setting up mechanisms to allow 50% of the area covered by the Plan Nord to be used, by 2035, for purposes other than industrial purposes, for the protection of the environment and for the preservation of biodiversity.
- Contribute to maximizing the economic spinoffs generated by the development of the natural resources in the area covered by the Plan Nord, in accordance with Québec's intergovernmental and international trade commitments.
- Advise the Government on any matter the latter submits to it.
- Set up a marketing office whose object is to communicate to local and regional enterprises as well as to all other Québec enterprises the supply and equipment needs of ordering parties operating in the area covered by the Plan Nord.

The Société is administered by a board of directors composed of 9 to 15 members, including the chair of the board and the president and chief executive officer, appointed by the government. At least the majority of the board members, including the chair, must qualify as independent directors and must be from the area covered by the Plan Nord. In addition, membership must tend toward gender parity.

The Act specifies that the Société will establish a strategic plan setting out the objectives it is pursuing and the priorities it has established in accordance with the government's policy directions relating to the Plan Nord. The strategic plan must be submitted to the government for approval and laid before the National Assembly.

The Société must also submit its financial statements to the minister responsible for the administration of the Act, along with an activity report for the preceding financial year. Both documents must be submitted to the National Assembly.

Last, the Société du Plan Nord falls under the responsibility of the minister designated by the government. It will play a leading role in the implementation of the Plan Nord while cooperating closely with all the partners involved in this broad-based project.

Since the mission of the Société is to coordinate and structure government actions under the Plan Nord, its head office will be in Québec's capital city. This sends a signal from the Québec government that the Société will be at the centre of all its actions.

In addition, to maintain contact with the communities and enterprises with which it will work on a daily basis, the Société must be present in the area covered by the Plan Nord and in other regions. Satellite offices will ensure ongoing, functional and efficient links with its clients by:

- Working with an organization in Nunavik.
- Working with the James Bay Development Corporation to serve the Eeyou Itschee Baie-James territory.
- Setting up satellite offices in the government's regional offices in Sept-Îles and Baie-Comeau to serve the Côte-Nord region.
- Posting staff members from the Société du Plan Nord to the office of the Chief Forester in Roberval to serve the Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region.

The Assembly of Partners

The Act also specifies that the Société du Plan Nord is be supported in its actions by the Assembly of Partners whose members are appointed in a way that ensures that it is representative of the local and aboriginal communities in the territories of Nunavik, Eeyou Itschee Baie-James, Côte-Nord and Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean and the main sectors of activity concerned. Its role is to provide an opinion to the Société and the Minister responsible on any matter the Société submits to it in relation to its mission or activities. The Assembly may also, on its own initiative, submit advice and recommendations.

7.1.2 Close, ongoing collaboration with government departments and bodies

The Société du Plan Nord will play a key role in the implementation of the Plan Nord. It will coordinate development in the area and the introduction of economic, social and environmental measures, working closely with the government departments and bodies concerned, several of which have already established joint action mechanisms, such as land use plans for public land.

The Société will help ensure better coordination of the activities of all the government players in northern Québec, for the benefit of the main clients and the citizens of Québec. It will be able to place its cooperation with each government department and body concerned on an official footing.

It is important to note that the James Bay Development Corporation, established in the early 1970s, will continue its current activities and will be involved as a satellite of the Société du Plan Nord.

In addition, the government's focus on the needs and demands of local and aboriginal communities in the North has led to the creation of a ministerial committee for the Plan Nord. The committee, chaired by the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Plan Nord and co-chaired by the Minister responsible for Native Affairs, will bring together the 14 ministers involved in the Plan Nord. Its mandate will be to relaunch the Plan Nord in all its economic, social and environmental dimensions.

To ensure cohesive government actions in the implementation of the Plan Nord, the steering committee for the Plan Nord, made up of the Deputy Ministers and Associate Deputy Ministers from the government departments concerned, will remain in place. Its mandate will be to ensure that the measures put forward by government departments and bodies are consistent with the policy directions and priorities identified in the Plan Nord.

7.1.3 Specific partnerships: Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones, Secrétariat à l'implantation de la stratégie maritime and Investissement Québec

The SAA the Secrétariat à l'implantation de la stratégie maritime and Investissement Québec will all play a key role in the implementation of the Plan Nord. The government's objective is to ensure that the missions and actions of all of these organizations complement those of the Société du Plan Nord.

Because of its specific mandate and its cross-departmental role, the SAA will remain the main point of contact with aboriginal communities in northern Québec. It will offer the main access point, within the limits of its mandate. It will also ensure the coordination and implementation of agreements and conventions signed by the Québec government and the aboriginal nations in the North. The Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones and the Société du Plan Nord will continue to work together to coordinate participation by aboriginal groups in the Plan Nord, in particular in order to maintain consistent actions and a climate of stability.

Clearly, enterprises are increasingly aware that their investment projects cannot be implemented without a degree of social acceptability. The government, via the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones, can play a leading role in this field by working with aboriginal communities and including them in the Plan Nord process. For this purpose, the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones will:

- Work with the aboriginal nations to establish a forum for consultations and participation in the process. Québec-wide tables could be considered.
- Promote the inclusion of Aboriginals as economic partners in various development projects.
- Make investors aware of the realities faced by the aboriginal peoples, and their rights.
- Promote the signing of impact and benefit agreements by project promoters and aboriginal communities, in compliance with the commitments made by the Québec government, in particular in connection with the Québec Mineral Strategy, the Sanarrutik Agreement and the Peace of the Brave Agreement.

The Secrétariat à l'implantation de la stratégie maritime will promote the development of harbour operations in Québec and especially northern Québec as part of the active deployment of the Plan Nord. It will be responsible, among other things, for ensuring that road and rail infrastructures meet the needs of various harbour development projects by helping to create intermodal connections. It will also promote a safer, more ecological approach to freight transportation.

Last, Investissement Québec will continue to work with enterprises in Québec while providing ongoing support for international corporations that wish to set up or expand their operations in Québec. Its actions will promote private investment and the attraction of enterprises to the area covered by the Plan Nord, highlighting the numerous advantages offered by Québec for the development of its natural resources and the application of its know-how.

The Société du Plan Nord will establish close ties with these organization in order to optimize the socio-economic benefits for the North and for all regions of Québec. Specific areas of cooperation will be established for that purpose.

7.1.4 Joint action structures

Throughout the process that led up to the initial version of the Plan Nord, local communities, First Nations and Inuit communities expressed a desire to participate fully in the drafting and implementation of the Plan as partners, within a framework that ensured respect for their aspirations and realities.

The Plan Nord could not exist without a close partnership with the communities that inhabit this vast territory and in a manner consistent with the development priorities they have defined for themselves.

The continuation of this dialogue with its partners in the North reflects the government's firm intention to maintain and strengthen the close, dynamic relationship it has established with local, and especially aboriginal, communities. aboriginal representatives will have a key role to play within the joint action structure for the Plan Nord both to honour existing agreements and also because their involvement is extremely relevant.

The government will assess the best way to encourage local and aboriginal communities to take part in the relaunching of the Plan Nord. It will also find ways to conduct ad hoc consultations with players in various sectors, including the private sector and the university community, to assess specific themes connected with the implementation of the Plan Nord.

Under the coordination of the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones, the Québec government also intends to renew on to set up aboriginal discussion tables for each nation—Cree, Naskapi, Innu and Inuit—to provide a discussion space adapted to its needs and aspirations.

7.2 Zones covered by the Plan Nord

The strategy for the relaunching of the Plan Nord sets out a new vision and updated policy directions and governance mechanisms that will apply to the entire area covered by the Plan Nord, and will also affect Québec as a whole as a lever for economic development.

However, its implementation and the actions taken under the Plan must be adapted to meet the specific needs of local populations, the visions they have expressed and the characteristics of each of the zones covered by the Plan Nord.

For this purpose, meetings have been organized in each zone covered by the Plan Nord with the aboriginal nations concerned and with representatives from civil society, associations, and representative groups from the business and environmental communities. The meetings have helped identify specific concerns which will require a range of adapted actions for each zone, population group and sector of activity in the area covered by the Plan Nord.

In general, the presence of the Société du Plan Nord via its satellite offices in each zone will meet a need identified by all stakeholders. In terms of representation, a concern shared by all participants, the Société will appoint the members of the Assembly of Partners to ensure the representation of local and aboriginal communities in Nunavik, the Eeyou Itschee Baie-James territory, the Côte-Nord region and the northern Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region, and also of the main sectors of activity. In addition, most of the members of the Société's board of directors will have to live in the area covered by the Plan Nord.

Scientific knowledge and research, together, constitute another cross-sector theme at the heart of the Plan Nord and a concern for most stakeholders. The government will ensure that the Institut nordique du Québec works with colleges and local research organizations, which already have in-depth knowledge of the features of the area, a strategic element in the land use decision-making process.

In addition, the government will take into account existing plans in the process of implementation in the area by the communities concerned.

More specifically, targeted actions under the Plan Nord will respond to the concerns expressed for each zone covered by the Plan Nord.

7.2.1 Nunavik

The priority actions under the Plan Nord will remain consistent with the agreements signed with the Inuit of Nunavik and will be harmonized with the priority actions under the Parnasimautik Consultation Report.[21] In addition, the Société du Plan Nord will ensure ongoing, functional and effective links with the Inuit of Nunavik. The needs expressed regarding housing, telecommunications, social services and worker training will be targeted by specific measures as part of the strategy for the relaunching of the Plan Nord. The cost of living study, currently under way, is expected to identify long-term solutions to this fundamental problem. The possibility of replacing the diesel-powered generators used to supply power to Inuit villages by less polluting, or renewable, sources of energy is also a priority for Nunavik.

7.2.2 Eeyou Istchee Baie-James

investments will be made over the next few years, especially for strategic infrastructures such as telecommunications facilities and roads, including the reconstruction of the Route de la Baie-James. In addition, economic development in the area will lead to the creation of jobs and economic benefits for local and aboriginal communities. Economic projects such as Stornoway's Renard Mine and Goldcorp's Éléonore Mine, as well as projects under the Québec Tourism Strategy North of the 49th parallel, will also benefit communities in the territory, including Cree communities. The region's energy needs will be addressed under the Plan Nord between Now and 2035.

The James Bay Development Corporation, established in 1971, is already present at various locations in the region and will become a key partner for the Société du Plan Nord and its satellite in the area.

Cree communities

The Plan Nord will respect existing agreements and the current relationship between the Cree Nation and the Québec government. A special Cree-Québec process has been established to promote Cree priorities for northern development. Administrative actions to allow the Cree Development Corporation to begin operations are under way, and it will be one of the partners of the Société du Plan Nord in the development of the North.

In addition, the Plan Nord will generate social benefits, especially through investments in education and training. The amount of $90 million for training in aboriginal communities was announced in the last budget.

21 Parnasimautik is a process founded on regional and local mobilization and unity. The Parnasimautik Consultation Report expresses the points of view of Nunavik Inuit.

7.2.3 Côte-Nord region

In the Côte-Nord region, job seekers and professional workers must be given better tools to support them in their search for employment. The Société du Plan Nord will help improve regional support services by offering assistance for municipalities and enterprises in periods of rapid growth or economic slowdown. As in several other regions in the area covered by the Plan Nord, support for the deployment and improvement of infrastructures is a major concern, and will be addressed by the Plan Nord toward 2035 through actions targeting:

- Telecommunications infrastructures for high-speed Internet and cellphone networks.
- Work to improve maritime infrastructures (ports).
- The resumption of work to extend Route 138 on the Basse-Côte-Nord and to continue work the reconstruction of Route 389.

Adapting public services to match the needs of local and aboriginal communities is one of the priority actions that will be taken in response to local expectations. More specifically, this concerns education services (preschool education on the Basse-Côte-Nord, elementary and secondary education, and improved university services) and health services.

In addition, improvements to maritime transportation services and the supply of perishable food products on the Basse-Côte-Nord are concerns for the local population and will be addressed by the government.

Last, the Côte-Nord region is particularly concerned by the development of the forest industry, which is facing a range of problems. The Plan Nord will promote the establishment of a high-performing, competitive wood products industry in the Côte-Nord region.

Innu communities

The Société du Plan Nord will respect existing agreements and those being negotiated with Innu communities, including the Agreement-in-Principle of General Nature, and will remain attentive to the Nation's specific concerns. The government will establish a Québec-Innu discussion table in order to start a new dialogue. The need for worker training in Innu communities will be targeted by specific measures under the strategy to relaunch the Plan Nord.[22]

Naskapi communities

Like other stakeholders, the Naskapis find that support for the deployment and improvement of infrastructures is a major concern. It will be addressed under the Plan Nord toward 2035 by actions in connection with:

- A fibre optic link to Schefferville.
- Work to improve the road between Schefferville and Kawawachikamach.

The government intends to respect existing agreements and has established the Québec-Naskapi discussion table to receive and deal with the Nation's other concerns.

22 This includes the Innus of Mashteuiatsh in the Lac-Saint-Jean region.

7.2.4 Northern Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region

The Plan Nord will take advantage of expertise and existing structures in the northern Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region,[23] in particular through:

- Regional niches of excellence under the Plan Nord.
- Committees to maximize regional spinoffs following the creation of the marketing office.

The development of forest resources is of key importance for the region's economy. The diversification and upgrading of forest products is one of the main policy directions of the Plan Nord. Access to the land and its resources is a concern in the region, which hopes to become the gateway to the North. Road, rail and sea links are all conditions for the success of the Plan Nord.

23 The concerns of the Innus of Mashteuiatsh have been included in the concerns of the Innu Nation in the North Shore section.

Port of Port-Cartier.
Photo credit: ArcelorMittal Exploitation minière Canada s.e.n.c.

With the relaunching of the Plan Nord, major investments will be made to support the development of projects already under way and those planned for the area north of the 49th parallel.

To put in place the conditions needed to promote development and access to the land, the government, via the Société du Plan Nord, will apply the amount available via the Fonds du Plan Nord, estimated at $356.7 million over the 2015-2020 timeframe.

This amount, along with the contributions made by various government departments and bodies and other partners, will enable the government to support, over the next five years, actions totalling $1,340 billion, in the form of:

- $914.2 million in investments for the completion of strategic infrastructure projects, and
- $425.4 million in expenditure for the implementation of priority actions and the administration of the Société du Plan Nord.

Adding the measures entirely financed by government departments and bodies and their partners, actions in the area covered by the Plan Nord will total almost $2 billion over the 2015-2020 timeframe. In addition to these amounts, substantial investments will be made by the private sector.

Contributions from the federal government may also increase the budgetary envelopes available.

THE **FONDS DU PLAN NORD**

A fund dedicated to northern development

The Fonds du Plan Nord is a special fund dedicated to financing the activities of the Société du Plan Nord that concern financial assistance for strategic infrastructure, measures promoting the development of the area covered by the Plan Nord, research and development, knowledge acquisition, protection of that area, and social measures aimed, in particular, at meeting the needs of the populations living in that area.

Income of the **Fonds du Plan Nord**

The Fonds' income comes mainly from an annual basic contribution reflecting the fiscal benefits generated by natural resource extraction projects and public infrastructure projects implemented in the area covered by the Plan Nord. They also include an annual contribution paid by Hydro-Québec, currently set at $10 million, and income from investments.

Annual revision of contributions

The amounts paid into the Fonds are revised annually to take into account any changes in the projects undertaken in the area covered by the Plan Nord and the resulting fiscal benefits.

This approach takes into account the economic activity generated north of the 49th parallel and allows the government to adjust the pace of its actions to develop northern Québec to reflect the evolution of projects under way or planned in the area.

400km railway linking the mine at Mont-Wright to the harbour facilities in Port-Cartier.
Photo credit: Arcelor Mittal Exploitation minière Canada s.e.n.c.

8.1 The Fonds du Plan Nord over a 25-year timeframe

To track the financial results of the Fonds du Plan Nord, the government has chosen a progressive, 25-year timeframe which will allow it to plan the use of the amounts in the Fonds du Plan Nord effectively, given that some projects will involve expenditure over a period of several decades.

Over a 25-year timeframe, an estimated $2.2 billion will be paid into the fund as the basic contribution. With the annual contribution from Hydro-Québec and income from other sources, the Fonds du Plan Nord should have a total envelope of nearly $2.7 billion.

These amounts will be used by the Société du Plan Nord in accordance with the objectives and priorities set out in its strategic plans in connection with the policy directions for the Plan Nord defined by the government.

Table 3 - Financial framework for the fonds du Plan Nord – 2015-2016 to 2019-2020 ($ Million)

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	5-year total [1]	25-year timeframe
Income	88.7	85.3	88.5	78.4	84.4	425.4	2,686.1
Expenditure	81.5	80.6	77.2	61.4	76.6	377.2	2,684.8
- Contributions to the Société du Plan Nord [1]	78.8	73.1	71.8	58.9	74.2	356.7	2,648.8
- Other expenditure	2.8	7.5	5.4	2.5	2.4	20.6	36.0
BALANCE	7.2	4.7	11.4	17.0	7.9	48.2	1.3

Note: All amounts have been rounded off and may not match the totals indicated.

(1) The balance forecast over the next five years will be retained by the Fonds du Plan Nord and used to support long-term commitments for current infrastructures projects.

Over a 25-year timeframe, the Fonds du Plan Nord will have spent an amount comparable to its anticipated income of around $2.7 billion. The money spent will have been used to support long-term commitments under current or future infrastructures projects and measures launched since 2011 for a total of $751.7 million.

Funding for measures and infrastructures projects may be increased by an increase in the envelope made available to the Fonds du Plan Nord, which reflects the scale of economic activity north of the 49th parallel.

8.2 Actions for the benefit of local and aboriginal populations and all Quebecers

Since the creation of the Fonds du Plan Nord in June 2011, several measures and infrastructure projects have been launched or completed as part of the Plan Nord.

To finance these actions from the Fonds, a total of $454.3 million has been spent, committed or set aside for the next five years.

The initial financial framework for the Plan Nord called for the Fonds du Plan Nord to finance actions totalling $900.6 million over five years, and a surplus has accumulated since some of these actions were not implemented.

With the relaunching of the Plan Nord, this surplus gives the government an opportunity to improve the allocation of the envelopes available on the basis of the objectives and priority actions for the development of northern Québec.

As a result, over the next five years, the Société du Plan Nord, using the financial resources made available from the Fonds du Plan Nord, will help finance new priority actions in the area covered by the Plan.

Like the measures and infrastructure projects already completed or launched in the area, these new initiatives will benefit local and aboriginal communities. They will also generate substantial economic benefits for the whole Québec population and contribute to a successful relaunch of the Plan Nord.

THE FONDS D'INITIATIVES DU **PLAN NORD**

The Fonds d'initiatives du Plan Nord will support the concrete implementation of innovative structural projects as part of the relaunching of the Plan Nord.

The Fonds will have an annual budget of $2 million and will give the Société du Plan Nord the flexibility it needs to support the implementation of projects that are both innovative and structural.

The work of the Fonds will complement that of other existing programs. The $2 million annual budget will be used to finance projects with specific needs that cannot be funded through other channels, or that require additional financial assistance.

Caribou.
Photo credit: Christian Chevalier

CONCLUSION

By relaunching the Plan Nord, the government has taken a strategic step in the process it began in 2011 to ensure a harmonious and sustainable approach to development in northern Québec.

Using an updated vision and an original approach, the government will be able to meet the objectives it has set to develop economic potential in the North for the benefit of Québec as a whole, ensure the wellbeing of local and aboriginal populations, protect the environment and preserve biodiversity throughout this vast area.

The objectives of the Plan Nord will be implemented on the basis of an action plan reflecting a concerted effort by various government departments and bodies and the active involvement of partners in the community. The plan will identify a set of priority actions which will be set in motion over the next five years.

These actions will help re-establish a context that is conducive to mining development in northern Québec, diversify and add value to forest resources, continue to develop energy potential, increase the socio-economic benefits from wildlife activities, promote tourism and design an bio-food model based on the eco-responsible use of local products.

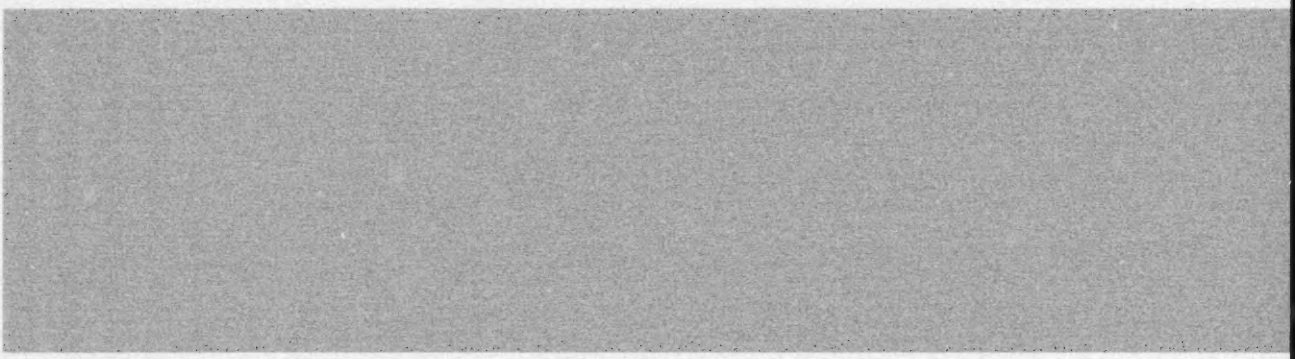
The local and aboriginal population will be the first to benefit from these actions, and also from the implementation of a series of measures adapted to northern realities in the field of education, health, social services, justice, public security, access to housing and cultural development.

Priority actions will also be proposed to protect the environment and conserve biodiversity in the North, in particular through the establishment of protected areas and national parks. Development projects will continue to be subject to efficient environmental assessment processes.

Concrete measures are described in the 2015-2020 action plan to create favourable conditions to attract private investment to northern Québec. A set of priority actions will facilitate access to land, improve telecommunications infrastructures, increase scientific knowledge about the northern environment and ensure the promotion of the Plan Nord in Canada and abroad.

The implementation of these actions will be coordinated by the Société du Plan Nord, which will, in particular, ensure close ongoing cooperation between the government departments and bodies concerned. The Société's actions will complement those of the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones, the Secrétariat à l'implantation de la stratégie maritime and Investissement Québec, which will be called upon to play a key role in the implementation of the Plan Nord. The Société will also continue the close dialogue that has been established with partners in the North.

Last, a special fund, the Fonds du Plan Nord, will help finance strategic infrastructures, social measures, and protection and development interventions. The Fund, whose budget will mirror economic trends in the area covered by the Plan Nord, will constitute a key financial incentive for the development and enhancement of northern Québec, for the benefit of the population of Québec as a whole and for the future generations.



- Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and Minister responsible for the Plan Nord
- Minister responsible for Native Affairs
- Minister of Justice and Minister responsible for the Status of Women
- Minister of the Economy, Innovation and Exports
- Minister of Municipal Affairs and Land Occupancy
- Minister of Education, Higher Education and Research and Minister responsible for Recreation and Sport
- Minister of Sustainable Development, the Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change
- Minister of Tourism
- Minister of Transport
- Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Solidarity
- Minister of Forests, Wildlife and Parks
- Minister for Rehabilitation, Youth Protection and Public Health
- Minister for Mines
- Minister for Small and Medium Enterprises, Regulatory Streamlining and Regional Economic Development

List of maps

Map 1 - Area covered by the Plan Nord 13

Map 2 - Area covered by the Plan Nord – Côte-Nord region 14

Map 3 - Aboriginal communities 16

Map 4 - Ressources and projects in the North 23

Map 5 - Major vegetation zones 32

Map 6 - Electricity generation in the area covered by the Plan Nord 38

Map 7 - Wildlife regions 46

Map 8 - Area covered by the 50% target* - Existing protected areas (March 2015) 78

Map 9 - Transportation infrastructures 83

List of figures

Figure 1 - Metal price index, May 1982 to May 2014 (constant 2012 dollars) 22

Figure 2 - Price of natural gas, fuel oil, diesel, coal and electricity in the industrial sector from 2015 to 2013 in $/GJ (2012 $) 41

List of tables

Table 1 - Mines in operation in the area covered by the Plan Nord 28

Table 2 - Mining projects in the area covered by the Plan Nord 28

Table 3 - Financial framework for the fonds du Plan Nord – 2015-2016 to 2019-2020 ($ Million) 100

This appendix supports the boxed text on page 60.

Recommendation made by the Table	Actions by government department or body	Departments and Bodies	Target outcome
1 Joint review of availability.	Release the available data as it is collected.	CCQ	Facilitate knowledge of the labour market in the construction industry. Produce an accurate statistical overview.
2 Dissemination of a range of information from the CCQ.	Conduct a study on the division of the Côte-Nord placement regions to identify the impacts on socio-economic realities.	CCQ	Better reflect socio-economic realities.
3 Obligation to document the regional hiring process.	Draw up an overview of the situation of work providers in the mining sector that promote regional hiring.	MERN	Promote good practice.
4 Increase in the value of contracts by agreement.	Propose training for municipalities concerning the contractual rules for municipal contracts.	MAMOT	Gain a better understanding of the rules for awarding municipal contracts (shared understanding of criteria, additional criteria to select contractors, and more systematic application of the rules).

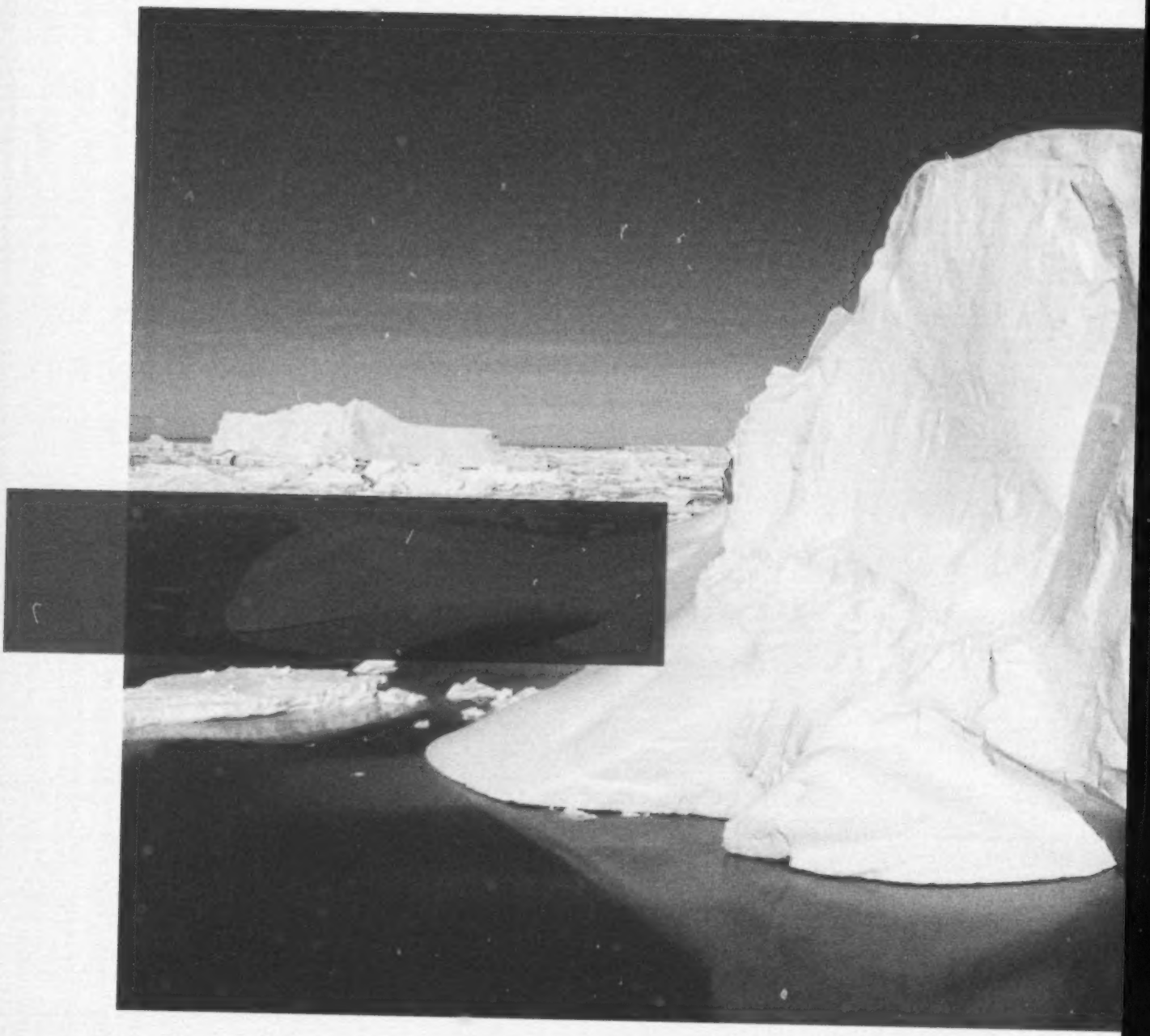
Recommendation made by the Table	Actions by government department or body	Departments and Bodies	Target outcome
5 Regionalization of the analysis of CCQ needs and decentralization of training.	Complete an inventory of the initial information available on needs in the region. Identify the jobs related to construction trades for which more training could be provided. Share the results of the analysis of manpower and training needs and information on the organization of workplace/ training sites.	CCQ and MEESR MEESR EQ	Ensure that the training available matches regional manpower needs.
6 Documentation of "FIFO" impacts.	Document FIFO issues for enterprises, workers and communities in the Côte-Nord region.	SPN, CCQ, MESS and MAMOT	Demonstrate the advantage of settling workers and their families at the work site (FIFO should be limited to a temporary recruitment process).
7 Development of local communities and incentives for establishment.	Via the Québec-municipalities infrastructure program, conduct strict monitoring of infrastructure projects for northern development that have obtained preliminary authorization. Establish the Société du Plan Nord and the Fonds du Plan Nord.	MAMOT and SPN SPN	Create jobs and improve living conditions. Establish conditions conducive to increased participation by the northern population in the development of their region and ensure the fair sharing of economic benefits between local and aboriginal communities.
8 Specific authority for the coordination of large-scale projects.	Highlight the key coordination role played by the SPN in the implementation of large-scale projects by working upstream with all players and creating the marketing office as part of the Société du Plan Nord.	SPN	Prepare communities for the arrival of large-scale projects to ensure that they share in the benefits. Optimize all resources to facilitate harmonious, ethical and respectful development with the communities concerned. Make enterprises aware of supply and equipment needs.
9 Support for host communities to attract workers.	Mandate the Bureau régional de coordination gouvernementale de la Côte-Nord (co-chaired by the regional directors of the Côte-Nord region and the MERN) to meet the need for the coordination of large-scale projects.	MAMOT, MERN and SPN	Ensure more consistent actions in the area.

Other recommendations from government departments and bodies	Actions by government department or body	Departments and Bodies	Target outcome
A Match between needs of enterprises and workforce skills.-.	Validate the number of graduates from training programs in common trades in construction and industry and facilitate use of the Workplace Apprenticeship Program by graduates. Ensure with the relaunching of the Plan Nord that the vocational training offered leads to the training of more specialized workers (implementation of training programs in collaboration with the De l'Estuaire and Du Fer school boards, creation of the Nordic institute). Acquire and fit out a modular, mobile plant/school as a pilot project in the mining sector for ore processing, connected with the Centre de formation professionnelle de la Baie-James.	MTESS and MEESR SPN and MEESR MEESR	Obtain a more detailed analysis of the labour market. Promote job prospects. Improve worker productivity. Develop student skills in ore processing by introducing a mobile infrastructure in several different regions.
B Updating of worker profiles on a more regular basis.	Encourage workers to update their profile more regularly in the computerized system to improve their chance of being selected or recommended.	CCQ	Optimize workers' chances of being recommended. Obtain more accurate information on worker availability.
C Regional support for workers.	Provide necessary support for construction workers by relying more on the expertise of the CCQ and EQ (use of computer equipment in multiservice rooms, introduction of group sessions for updating resumes, online placement, use of local employment centres).	EQ and CCQ	Idem

APPENDIX 4 - LIST OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND BODIES

CCQ	Commission de la construction du Québec
EQ	Emploi-Québec
HQ	Hydro-Québec
IQ	Investissement Québec
MAMOT	Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Occupation du territoire
MAPAQ	Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation
MCC	Ministère de la Culture et des Communications
MDDELCC	Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques
MEIE	Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et des Exportations
MEESR	Ministère de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche
MERN	Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles
MFA	Ministère de la Famille
MFFP	Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune, et des Parcs
MFQ	Ministère des Finances
MJQ	Ministère de la Justice
MRIF	Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie
MSP	Ministère de la Sécurité publique
MSSS	Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux
MTOUR	Ministère du Tourisme
MTQ	Ministère des Transports
MTESS	Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale

SAA	Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones
SAIC	Secrétariat aux affaires intergouvernementales canadiennes
SCF	Secrétariat à la condition féminine
SPN	Société du Plan Nord
SÉPAQ	Société des établissements et de plein air du Québec



Québec